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**TANEYEV'S INFLUENCE ON PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES  
IN EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY RUSSIAN POLYPHONIC MUSIC**

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This thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Manchester  
Metropolitan University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Awarded for a Collaborative Programme of Research  
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**ROYAL NORTHERN COLLEGE OF MUSIC AND  
THE MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The contribution of the composer, pianist, pedagogue and theorist Sergey Taneyev to Russian musical culture at the turn of the twentieth century is evident. His input in the development of music theory and practice cannot be overestimated. Taneyev's study of vertical-shifting and horizontal-shifting counterpoint in two and three voices explains the nature of polyphonic writing and assists in acknowledging the structure of a piece with further directions for practising.

This dissertation demonstrates Taneyev's influence on his contemporaries and the impact of his contrapuntal rules and technical instructions on the practice and performance strategies of specific polyphonic repertoire by Medtner, Prokofiev, Grechaninov, Stravinsky and Yevseyev. While working in archives in Russia on the first stages of my research in 2014 – 2015 I discovered Taneyev's unpublished exercises for pianists. The significance of Taneyev's pedagogical method and necessity to find an alternative approach in practising contrapuntal repertoire motivated me to explore his *'Gymnastic exercises for hands and body,' 'On the subject of piano technique,' '5-finger exercises'* and *'Exercises in Arpeggios'* in order to demonstrate how they might be used in practice. Taneyev's original instructions clarify the principal methods of voice-leading and create an individual approach for practice and performance methods.

Chapter One of this dissertation summarises Taneyev's professional achievements as a theorist, concert pianist and professor at the Moscow Conservatory. Chapter Two deals with the implementation of the fugue in the piano repertoire of Russian composers and the influence of Taneyev's compositional technique on his students and contemporaries through particular melodic, rhythmic and structural features. Chapter Three describes Taneyev's four manuscripts of original exercises I found in archives in Klin and Moscow. Although these documents were fully accessible to music scholars in the archives they have never been used in publications or any other research developments and performance purposes. The application of Taneyev's instructions in my practice of selected polyphonic piano works by Medtner, Prokofiev, Grechaninov, Stravinsky and Yevseyev is also discussed in this chapter.

The archival documents of Taneyev's personal correspondence as well as manuscripts of his selected piano works and practical instructions are in Appendix One.

My application of Schenkerian analysis to Taneyev's unpublished *Fugue in D major* is represented in Appendix Two. This technique demonstrates the effectiveness of harmonic analysis. However, it diminishes the distinctiveness of this contrapuntal work, making unimportant the uniqueness of the musical texture and its unlikeness to any other composition.

The printed version of the slides demonstrated in my lecture-recital can be found in Appendix Three.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## INTRODUCTION

The musical inheritance of Sergey Taneyev, his theoretical treatises and pedagogical method demonstrated the composer's originality and expertise in the Russian musical environment at the turn of the twentieth century. After Taneyev's influential work *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style* was published in 1909, there was a revival in the study of counterpoint in Russian classical music. Following the research of different types of imitation, canon and fugue in particular, Taneyev's contemporaries reviewed their understanding of contrapuntal technique. Subsequently, a number of Russian composers implemented this knowledge by applying fugue or invention in their works of non-polyphonic genres.

The contrapuntal nature of the piano reflected on the majority of piano repertoire, polyphonic in essence, dictating the practice methods and performance strategy. When examining the programme regulations of a great number of conservatoires and piano competitions, it is difficult to overestimate the significance of polyphonic repertoire. However, I would argue that few musicologists specifically concentrate on counterpoint in studies of music and performance. Paul Badura-Skoda in his book *Interpreting Bach at the keyboard* (1999) focuses on performance features, such as tempo, articulation and dynamics with an accentuation on ornamentation issue, whereas Charles Rosen in *The Classical Style* (2005) describes the Schenkerian analysis method and its application in performance of all tonal music. In this respect, *a Guide to the daily work of the pianist and composer* by Nikolay Medtner, written in the form of practice diary, as well as his original instructions notated by the composer's last student Edna Iles in 1930 – 1950 are valuable, even though they do not articulate on the issues of contrapuntal techniques.<sup>1</sup> Medtner gives comments on general rules for the pianists, tempi and rhythm features, performance

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<sup>1</sup> The Edna Iles Medtner Collection preserved in the British Library became the topic of a recent dissertation by Alexander Karpeyev *New light on Nikolay Medtner as pianist and teacher. The Edna Iles Medtner Collection (EIMC) at the British Library*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis, City University London, 2014.

preparation and numerous technical exercises. Exploration of composer's musical language is deeply examined in *Prokofiev's Piano Sonatas* (2008) by Boris Berman, where the author articulates the presence of contrapuntal texture in selected sonatas with detailed explanation of musical features and their interpretation.

A recent publication, *New about Taneyev* (2005) edited by Taneyev's great-niece Elena Fetisova and dedicated to the composer's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, reveals different aspects of his versatile personality and highlights Taneyev's achievements including detailed analysis of his rare recording of Mozart's Fantasy in C minor and an unknown fugue, presumably the composer's improvisation in contrapuntal style.<sup>2</sup> The Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory became the host institution of the three-day conference in commemoration of Taneyev's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in November 2005. The multifarious activities included lectures on Taneyev's archival materials, phases of his personal and professional life, as well as presentations on the composer's musical and theoretical inheritance reflected in multiple researches of the same name. Acquaintance with the materials of this event years later confirmed my interest in Taneyev's pedagogical method and his performance preferences of repertoire and practice strategies.

On the stage of Taneyev research, a production of his opera *Oresteia* directed by Anastasia Belina-Johnson in Leeds in 2009<sup>3</sup> as well as recordings of rarely played Taneyev's works made by a number of distinguished pianists in the last decade,<sup>4</sup> demonstrate gradual popularisation of challenging repertoire and shows an increasing interest in the composer's works in recent years, which has proved the necessity of this study.

The aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate how performance can be transformed by the understanding of counterpoint in specific piano repertoire and expose the

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<sup>2</sup> Fetisova E, *Novoe o Taneyeve*, based on materials from the conference *Music Comes First*, research and publishing center of Moscow conservatoire DECA-VS, Moscow, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Belina-Johnson A, PhD thesis *A critical Re-Evaluation of Taneyev's Oresteia*, The University of Leeds School of Music, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Notable recordings by Liliya Zilberstain, *Nuova Era*, 1989; Joseph Bahowetz, Sergey Ivanovich Taneyev, *Toccata Classics*, 2000; Olga Kern, *Harmonia Mundi*, 2005; Olga Solovieva, Violin Sonata and Piano Music, *Naxos*, 2009; Nikita Mndoyants, *Antalogy of Piano Music by Russian and Soviet Composers*, Pt.8, Melodia, 2014.

impact of its application in the music of Sergey Taneyev and composers he subsequently influenced. Even though Taneyev contributed to piano repertoire by writing only two polyphonic pieces, *Fugue in D major* (unpublished) and *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, his contrapuntal method is reflected in the piano works of Medtner, Gretchaninov, Stravinsky, Yevseyev and Prokofiev among others in following years. From the performance perspective the presence of strong contrapuntal elements in selected repertoire leads to a distinctive rhythmical, structural and dynamic organisation. For this reason a considerable part of my thesis will be dedicated to the summarising and implementation of Taneyev's original contrapuntally oriented exercises in specific piano repertoire, in order to expand the interest of performers and listeners in the rarely played works with elements of generic counterpoint.<sup>5</sup>

This dissertation consists of three main chapters. Chapter One is dedicated to Taneyev's contribution to Russian musical culture at the turn of the twentieth century. Referral to various literature sources offers different opinions on Taneyev's versatile personality. This chapter's three subheadings introduce his predominant professional activities with particular concentration on his period of teaching and leadership in the Moscow Conservatory, fundamental commitment to the study of counterpoint, as well as his career as a pianist. The First chapter introduces the list of his numerous students from theory, piano and composition departments and explains his relationship with contemporaries and their attitudes.

Chapter Two opens with an outline of the fugal genre in historical context, exploring the use and development of the fugue in the rarely performed works by Taneyev's predecessors, primarily Glinka, Tchaikovsky, Rubinstein, Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazunov, Lyadov and Lyapunov. It is followed by analysis of Taneyev's principal fugue examples in piano music, the composer's early attempt in contrapuntal writing, unpublished *Fugue in D major* as well as *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*.

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<sup>5</sup> By mentioning generic counterpoint I refer to traditional contrapuntal models, distinctive from a contemporary Schenkerian conception of voice-leading.

An extensive part of the indicated chapter is focused on the fugue's occurrence in piano works by Taneyev's successors with the following demonstration of the influence of Taneyev's contrapuntal technique and compositional method on his students and adherents through particular melodic, rhythmic and structural features of the following piano works: *Sonata in F minor Op.5* by Medtner, *Piano Sonata (1924)* by Stravinsky, *Sonata in B flat major Op. 84, No.8* by Prokofiev, *Sonatina in F major Op.110, No.2* by Grechaninov and *Polyphonic pieces on Russian themes* by Taneyev's last student Yevseyev. The transformation of compositional techniques, purposeful combination of polyphonic writing with other genres and the composers' intention to make contrapuntal textures dominate in these pieces prompted my choice of this repertoire.

Examination of Taneyev's original exercises found in archives in Russia became the central target of Chapter Three. Detailed analysis of the composer's four manuscripts reveals an alternative way of practising particular piano repertoire with contrapuntal textures.

*Gymnastic exercises for hands and body* in subheading 1 outline Taneyev's instructions for a healthy and physically prepared body pianists should consider in their daily routine proceeding with the second unpublished document *On the subject of piano technique* in subheading 2. It is divided into three sections and explains in more detail Taneyev's concept about the significance of hand and body posture as well as solving phrasing problems. Subheading 3 concentrates on the composer's original *5-finger exercises* designed for the multiple tasks of each hand, grouped in five-finger positions. The final section of this chapter is dedicated to *Exercises in Arpeggios* recorded by Taneyev's student Yevseyev where the composer complicated arpeggios and their inversions by adding an extra note to the triads and turned them into four-notes arpeggios of different types.

In this chapter I will be referring to my individual practice of specific contrapuntal repertoire with application of Taneyev's original instructions allowing coherent description of the practice process with relevant benefits.

My research is based on the combination of theoretical and practical aspects. As a result, the project's content suggested the structure of my final portfolio to be

consisting of two corresponding parts, a series of various performances of 180 minutes in total duration and complementary writing.

The overall recording will be shared between two different aspects:

- Piano repertoire containing strong contrapuntal elements recorded from selected live performances as well as previously planned recording sessions:

1. Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29* (1910);
2. Taneyev *Fugue in D major* (1879, unpublished). Recorded in two versions, including live performance and demonstration of Schenkerian middleground analysis;
3. Medtner *Sonata in F minor Op.5, No.1* (1895-1903);
4. Stravinsky *Piano Sonata (1924)*. Recorded in two versions, in 2012 and 2016;
5. Grechaninov *Sonatina in F major Op.110, No.2* (1927);
6. Prokofiev *Sonata in B flat major Op. 84, No.8* (1944);
7. Yevseyev *Polyphonic pieces on Russian themes Op.57* (1948 – 1949).

This repertoire demonstrates connections with Taneyev's compositional contrapuntal method through melodic, rhythmic or structural elements recognised in suggested works.

- Lecture-recital, in which the principal statements from my complementary writing support demonstrations of the excerpts from Taneyev's unpublished exercises and selected contrapuntal repertoire. The questions of tempo adjustment, finding an appropriate quality of sound through the use of specific dynamic features as well as spreading the emotional and physical energy towards the culmination, suitable for the piece combining two genres, are covered in the lecture-recital.

Having had access to numerous materials related to Taneyev's musical inheritance and his contrapuntal method in the UK libraries, it was crucial to initiate archival trips to Moscow and Klin in Russia to work with manuscripts, letters and most importantly

unedited and unpublished exercises and piano works by Taneyev and his students. My principal motivation in working with original materials was discovering new polyphonic piano repertoire, such as the *Fugue in D major* by Taneyev and *Polyphonic pieces on Russian themes Op.57* by Yevseyev, in order to introduce it to the general public through my performances with the potential of publishing these works in the future.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Taneyev's contribution to Russian musical culture**

#### **1. Taneyev in the Moscow Conservatory**

The Moscow Conservatory played an important role in Taneyev's life, becoming his second home for nearly forty years. Born in November 1856 Taneyev began his association with the Conservatory in 1866 after his mother had written to the newly opened institution. He was subsequently sent there shortly before his tenth birthday to study piano and elementary theory. Taneyev mastered piano technique and artistry in the class of Nikolas Rubinstein and composition with Pyotr Tchaikovsky. Taneyev graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in 1875 becoming the first Gold medalist of the institution.

In 1878 Taneyev commenced his pedagogical career in his alma mater, succeeding Tchaikovsky as teacher of harmony and instrumentation. As piano professor in 1881 – 1888 and composition in 1883 – 1888 Taneyev introduced counterpoint class in 1887 to the curriculum. In 1885, at the age of 29, Taneyev was appointed Director of the Conservatory. During the four years of Taneyev's leadership, significant changes took place at the institution. He managed to reform the piano pedagogy system and to expand and reinvigorate the theory department. Taneyev wished to open a pedagogical faculty for pianists who did not have the technical ability to become great performers, but nevertheless had an aptitude for teaching. He paid exceptional attention to the orchestral and choral sessions, supporting the student productions of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* as well as Handel's *Samson* and *Israel in Egypt*.<sup>6</sup> Naturally, with his Conservatory duties and work as a concert pianist, Taneyev had very little time left for composition, a fact that undoubtedly made him decide to resign as director in 1889 and teach only the counterpoint class.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Savenko S, *Sergey Ivanovich Taneyev*, Moscow, Muzyka, 1986, p.8.

<sup>7</sup> Lyudmyla Korabelnikova gives detailed analysis of Taneyev's teaching activity in her work *S.I. Taneyev in the Moscow Conservatory* (Moscow, 1974). Her other publication *The musical inheritance of S.I. Taneyev: historical and stylistic research* (Moscow, 1986), focuses on the principal features of Taneyev's compositional style and pedagogical method.

The most remarkable result of Taneyev's teaching is reflected in the list of his own students that included pianists, conductors, composers and musicologists: Rachmaninov, Scriabin, Medtner, Gliere, Igumnov, Yavorsky, Lyapunov, Yevseyev, Gnesina and Grechaninov, among other outstanding musicians.

Taneyev left the Moscow Conservatory in 1905. An argument with the director, Vasily Safonov, based on a disagreement about the content and structure of the educational strategy, influenced Taneyev's decision to leave. A letter of support from Anatoly Lyadov, published by one of the leading Russian newspapers, represented the reaction of the majority of Taneyev's students and colleagues on his resignation:

'I don't feel sorry for you, but the Conservatory, which lost an irreplaceable professor and a wonderful musician. You are the golden page in the history of the Moscow Conservatory and nobody's hand is able to destroy it'.<sup>8</sup>

### **1.1. Founder of class of counterpoint**

Taneyev's pedagogical activity in the Moscow Conservatory between 1878 and 1905 demonstrated the variety of the classes he was teaching. However, his professional career in the institution began and finished with theoretical disciplines. Notably, the only class Taneyev was leading after leaving the director's position was counterpoint, which he initiated as a part of the musical form curriculum. According to the memoirs of Taneyev's students, a significant part of each lesson was normally dedicated to the study of counterpoint from an historical perspective. The music examples of the voice-leading masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Palestrina, Orlando Lasso, Josquin de Pres and Bach, were regularly used to demonstrate the difference between strict and free counterpoint.<sup>9</sup> Joel Engel, one of Taneyev's students wrote:

'Taneyev's class of counterpoint, fugue and form designated his students to live through the entire historical process of the music evolution and to appreciate everything beautiful, strong and eternal from the past'.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Newspaper *Russkie Vedomosti*: open letter of Anatoly Lyadov to Sergey Taneyev, 1905. Taneyev's archive at the P. I. Tchaikovsky State House-Museum in Klin.

<sup>9</sup> Taneyev extensively used the music extracts of these composers among others in his *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style* and *The Study of Canon*.

<sup>10</sup> Merkulov A, *Taneyev plays Mozart. Novoe o Taneyeve*, research and publishing center of Moscow conservatoire DECA-VS, Moscow, 2007, p.179.



Taneyev's archive at the P. I. Tchaikovsky State House-Museum in Klin preserves his notes prepared for the lectures at the Moscow Conservatory on fugue writing, the counterpoint of intervals and examples of strict and free imitations.

After leaving his alma mater in 1905 Taneyev taught privately without any remuneration. In Taneyev's archive of the Glinka National Museum in Moscow I worked with unpublished memoirs and the exercise books containing the counterpoint and fugue lessons of his last student, Sergey Yevseyev. As well as giving detailed accounts of the lessons Yevseyev recorded several of his homework tasks, which included writing three, four and five voice fugues with implementation of various types of modes (Lydian, Mixolydian, Dorian and others), double fugues, use of syncopations and triple counterpoint of an octave.<sup>11</sup> Yevseyev's memoirs revealed his impressions of his lessons with Taneyev:

'This happiness and the smile of the destiny cannot be underestimated or forgotten. The most appropriate and easiest way to master the rules of the melodic development of the piece is through the study of polyphony. My career as a composer depended on my success in this process'.<sup>12</sup>

## **2. Taneyev's study of counterpoint**

### ***2.1. Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style***

Taneyev's post-Conservatory period is associated with profound theoretical activity. His treatises on strict counterpoint and the rules of canonic writing were unique. As a proponent of tonal music with strong harmonic connections, Taneyev fought against monotony in musical composition, defending harmonic innovations, chord sequences and key relationships:

'As for the music of today, the harmony that gradually lost its virility would be greatly benefited by the strength that the contrapuntal forms can infuse'.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Yevseyev S, *Memoires about Taneyev*, 1940, Taneyev's archive of The Glinka National Museum in Moscow.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Taneyev S, *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style*, Translated by G. Ackley Brower, Bruce Humphries Publishers, Boston, 1962, p.19.

In 1906, Taneyev finished his monumental theoretical work – *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style*, which took him seventeen years to write.<sup>14</sup> The book included two major sections related to vertical and horizontal counterpoint for two and three voices, with explanation of contrapuntal rules and specifically developed algebraic notation based on numerous musical examples. Taneyev acknowledged that he was aiming not just to analyse and classify various examples from musical literature, but primarily to explain the consonance/dissonance relationship based on deductive calculations.<sup>15</sup>

Taneyev's considerable teaching experience is reflected in the way his treatise is written. He consistently emphasised the application of the rules of contrapuntal writing in practice. In the context of suggested exercises for two-voice vertical-shifting counterpoint, Taneyev indicated that the excessive exploitation of complicated and awkward harmonic sequences could negatively influence the work of beginner contrapuntists. He also advocated that the use of accessible substitutions might help musicians to master the rules of contrapuntal writing without causing visual disadvantages to the technical side of the work. Taneyev compared this observation of the exercises in contrapuntal writing with piano practice. He considered that a reasonable and well-controlled application of particular piano exercises with unusual and occasionally uncomfortable finger position contributes to the development of virtuosic technique. However, excessive use of such exercises could tire the wrists and ruin the physical ability of the hands.<sup>16</sup>

The term 'convertible' in the English version of the treatise does not give an accurate translation of the word 'подвижной' used by Taneyev. An alternative interpretation of the same word as 'moveable' would reflect the meaning more appropriately and explain the content of the whole study. According to Simon Desbruslais, the lack of knowledge in the field of counterpoint, observed in his article *The Western Reception of Sergei Taneyev*, led to the imprecise translation made by Ackley Brower in 1962.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Taneyev mentioned in the lesson with one of his latest students Panteleymon Vasiliev: 'Perhaps, decades are needed to master counterpoint'. Vasilyev P, *Memoires about Taneyev, Novoe o Taneyeve*, research and publishing center of Moscow conservatoire DECA-VS, Moscow, 2007, p.287.

<sup>15</sup> Taneyev S, *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style*, Moscow, Belaieff in Leipzig Publishers, 1909, p.349.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p.119.

<sup>17</sup> The issues of the English translation were revealed and discussed by Simon Desbruslais in his article

In my research I do not take issue with the English translation but aim instead to connect Taneyev's contrapuntal technique with his compositional method referring mostly to the original Russian version published in 1909.

## **2.2. The Study of Canon**

Viktor Belyaev, who completed, edited and published Taneyev's work in 1929 in Moscow declared that '*Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style* and *The Study of Canon* essentially complement each other and should be considered as two parts of the whole'.<sup>18</sup>

Limited information about canons, particularly concerning the difference in the distances of their theme entries in the works of his predecessors determined Taneyev's intention of the fundamental research in this field.<sup>19</sup>

Working on the book since the last decade of the nineteenth century Taneyev particularly focused on two-, three- and four-voice canon on a single theme, deliberately leaving the multiple-themed canon behind. The principal distinction between Taneyev's two treatises suggested that the rules of canonic writing concentrated in *The Study of Canon* could be appropriately used in the counterpoint of the strict as well as free style.

In his recommendations addressed to young composers, Taneyev insisted that they could only achieve the delicacy and fluency in composition by constant practising the contrapuntal exercises after completing a one-year course of counterpoint in the conservatory. In this context Taneyev compared composers with accomplished virtuosic pianists, who dedicate a significant part of their practice time to technical exercises throughout their professional career.<sup>20</sup>

In his treatise Taneyev acknowledged the lack of popularity in the use of canonic writing by modern composers and made the following statement:

'The use of imitations could be extensively applied in modern music which at present clearly demonstrates the tendency in contrapuntal writing. The

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*The Western Reception of Sergei Taneyev*, in *The Music Theory Society's Journal* Vol. 2015/1 (9), pp.8 – 10.

<sup>18</sup> Taneyev S, *The Study of Canon*, Moscow, Muzikalniy sector, 1929, p.VII.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.101.

<sup>20</sup> Taneyev S, *The Study of Canon*, Moscow, Muzikalniy sector, 1929, p.6.

improvements of the newest technique, such as chromatics, modulations and large amount of independent dissonance combinations, should not limit the young composers by the rules of the masters of old times exclusively'.<sup>21</sup>

*The Study of Canon* became available in an English version only in 1999, after Paul Richard Grove's dissertation on Taneyev's unpublished treatise was completed.<sup>22</sup>

Described by Nikolay Kashkin as 'the researcher who is going far ahead from all Western-European theoreticians'<sup>23</sup> and by Leonid Sabaneyev as 'the contrapuntist who cannot be compared to any of his colleagues either in Russia or abroad'<sup>24</sup> Taneyev achieved his goal of introducing the study of counterpoint, as well as his theory of music education to Russian students of composition and music forms.

### **3. Taneyev – pianist**

Taneyev's activity as a pianist was never the focus of the numerous studies about the composer's pedagogical experience, his theoretical approach and compositional method. However, at different periods of his musical career Taneyev devoted time to improving his virtuoso skills and appearing as a solo and chamber musician in Russia as well as abroad.

Taneyev mastered his piano technique and artistry in classes given by Nikolas Rubinstein. In 1875 the young virtuoso introduced two significant works to Moscow audiences; Brahms's *Piano Concerto in D minor* and Tchaikovsky's newly written *Piano Concerto in B flat minor*. The latter performance received a positive reaction from Tchaikovsky, who declared in his musical notes:

'The composer could not wish for a better performance'.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.101.

<sup>22</sup> Grove P.R, Dissertation *Sergei Ivanovich Taneev's 'Doctrine of the Canon': A translation and commentary*. University of Arizona, 1999.

<sup>23</sup> Kashkin N, The article *Remarkable book about music* in the newspaper Russian Word, 1910. Taneyev's archive at the P. I. Tchaikovsky State House-Museum in Klin.

<sup>24</sup> Sabaneyev L, The article, *New book of S.I.Taneyev*, in the newspaper *The Voice of Moscow*, January 1910. Taneyev's archive at the P. I. Tchaikovsky State House-Museum in Klin.

<sup>25</sup> Tchaikovsky P.I. Musical and critical articles, Moscow, 1953.

Taneyev was the first performer of Tchaikovsky's *Concert Fantasia Op.56*, the *Second Piano Concerto* and *Piano Trio*.<sup>26</sup> He also completed and instrumented his teacher's *Third Piano Concerto* and *Andante and Finale* posthumously.

As a piano professor Taneyev educated more than twenty students in the years 1881 – 1888.<sup>27</sup> However, students from other departments were keen to follow Taneyev's recommendations on performance and placed great value on the pianist's personal experience. It is known that Rachmaninov, who was studying composition with Taneyev, followed his teacher's advice on the interpretation of Tchaikovsky's piano works. Another of Taneyev's students, Alexander Goldenweizer, mentioned in his memoirs that his teacher was a very passionate performer with extraordinary sight-reading skills and an exceptional memory which allowed him to play any extract from a wide range of piano, chamber and orchestral repertoire by heart.<sup>28</sup>

Taneyev's dedication to the problems of musical forms as well as his expertise in harmonic language informed his performance style. At the same time, Taneyev's personal musical taste influenced the repertoire he chose for his students. They were required to pay special attention to polyphonic music, performing not only piano works by Bach, but also preludes and fugues by Handel, Mendelssohn and Saint-Saëns.

Taneyev travelled extensively during his career. His first visits to Greece, Italy, Switzerland and France in 1876 – 1877 were mainly for educational purposes but he made occasional public appearances as a pianist. Future engagements brought him to major venues in Latvia, Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy, Czech Republic and England where Taneyev was either performing as a soloist or with The Bohemian

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<sup>26</sup> Taneyev's student Sergey Yevseyev declared after his teacher's performance of the *Concert Fantasia Op.56* by Tchaikovsky: 'Taneyev emphasised the presence of folk elements in the piece delicately demonstrating the composer's concept. His remarkable ability to interpret *crescendo* was masterfully applied in the first movement's Cadenza'. Yevseyev S, *Memoires about Taneyev*, 1940, Taneyev's archive of The Glinka National Museum in Moscow.

<sup>27</sup>In addition to the number of musicians attending different disciplines taught by Taneyev, mentioned earlier in this chapter (p.16), the list of his students from piano department included Mazurina, Unolova, Albedil, Kleyn, Zavadsky, Bartenev, Bogomolova, Voskresenskaya, Ivanova, Koreschenko, Nemitskaya and Gnesina among others.

<sup>28</sup> Goldenweiser A. *From my memoirs*, S.I.Taneyev, *Materials and Documents*, Vol.1, p.304.

Quartet. Taneyev's appearances in collaboration with Czech musicians included his *Piano Trio Op.22, Piano Quartet Op.20 and Piano Quintet Op.30*.<sup>29</sup>

Rimsky-Korsakov's letter to Taneyev written in 1905 described his reputation abroad:

'In Germany, where I write this letter from, people always look at foreign music haughtily. However, Taneyev is one of a few Russian names known and respected by German public... In Rome I was pleased to acknowledge a positive reaction of Italian music society on Taneyev's *Oresteia*, not very well accepted in Russia'.<sup>30</sup>

The diversity of Taneyev's piano repertoire included works by Bach, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Tchaikovsky among others. One of the reviews after the performance of Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy Op.80* by Taneyev in 1913 in Moscow revealed:

'The intelligent and elegant interpretation of this piece by a talented professor of the Moscow Conservatory resulted in a very sincere audience welcome and called a thunder of applause'.<sup>31</sup>

Taneyev's repertoire consisted of numerous works by Mozart. Taneyev performed his Piano Concertos, Sonatas, Fantasies, Variations and miniatures in public concerts and at informal gatherings with students and colleagues. According to Alexander Merkulov, Taneyev greatly admired Mozart. This was uncommon at the time as the majority of Taneyev's contemporaries considered music by Mozart, particularly his piano works, as old fashioned and only suitable for educational purposes.<sup>32</sup>

Taneyev's students and colleagues commented favorably on his pianistic abilities and performance style. Referring to Alexander Merkulov, Taneyev was able to engage audiences with performances full of temperament and affectivity.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Selected concert programmes from Latvia, Germany, France, Czech Republic and the UK between 1878 and 1911 are preserved in Taneyev's archive at the P.I.Tchaikovsky State House-Museum in Klin.

<sup>30</sup> *Foreign Responses*, Munich, September 1905. Taneyev's archive at the P.I.Tchaikovsky State House-Museum in Klin.

<sup>31</sup> Russian Newspaper No.219, *Teatr i Muzika*, 1913. Taneyev's archive at the P.I.Tchaikovsky State House-Museum in Klin.

<sup>32</sup> Merkulov A, *Taneyev plays Mozart. Novoe o Taneyeve*, research and publishing center of Moscow conservatoire DECA-VS, Moscow, 2007, p. 153. In his article Merkulov focuses on the analysis of Taneyev's recording of the first 27 bars of the *Fantasia in C minor K 396* by Mozart. Julius Blok, who brought the phonograph invented by Thomas Edison in 1877 from the USA, made this rare recording in 1891.

<sup>33</sup> Merkulov A, *Taneyev plays Mozart. Novoe o Taneyeve*, research and publishing center of Moscow conservatoire DECA-VS, Moscow, 2007, p.187.

Boleslav Yavorsky, a theorist and a composition student of Taneyev described his teacher's performance style:

'While listening to Taneyev's performance I never had a feeling of the mechanical interpretation of the notes. His thinking in different styles was certainly imaginative and expressive'.<sup>34</sup>

Taneyev's performances of chamber music were very popular. His composition student Nikolay Myaskovsky described Taneyev's performance of the *Piano Quintet Op.30* as 'absolutely astonishing'. He goes on to say that the performance 'occasionally became frightening due to the pianist's powerful temperament and impressive strength'.<sup>35</sup> Taneyev performed the *Piano Quintet Op.30* together with his *Piano Trio Op.22* and selected romances in his last public concert in January 1915, just a few months before his unexpected death.

Taneyev believed that 'virtuosity can be achieved by only a few different exercises repeated every day'.<sup>36</sup> It is not known to me whether Taneyev specified particularly useful exercises in this context. However, the unpublished instructions and technical exercises in the composer's archives in Klin and Moscow reflect his practice and performance priorities. The interpretation and application of these instructions in my own practice of specific contrapuntal repertoire will be analysed in Chapter Three.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Interrelation of the fugue with other genres**

#### **1. Fugue as a model of generic counterpoint from Glinka to Taneyev**

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<sup>34</sup> Yavosrsky B, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1964, Vol.2, Part 1, p.342.

<sup>35</sup> Merkulov A, *Taneyev plays Mozart. Novoe o Taneyeve*, research and publishing center of Moscow conservatoire DECA-VS, Moscow, 2007, p.168.

<sup>36</sup> Epigraph to the unpublished *Encyclopedia of piano technique* by Taneyev's student J.V.Weinberg. The archive of The Glinka National Museum in Moscow.

Polyphony was an essential component in Russian music from the end of the sixteenth century until the present. Folk tunes of melodious character, which transformed gradually from a single melody, were the earliest references to polyphonic texture prior to the seventeenth century. Deciphering the first attempts of straightforward voice leading examples became the subject of academic debate because of the ambiguity in the interpretation of the original manuscripts. This corresponds to the substantial work on the development of polyphony in Russian music by Vladimir Protopopov, an expert in the field of contrapuntal writing in Russian and Western music from the Baroque era until the twentieth century.<sup>37</sup> According to Protopopov Russian music avoided the phase of gradual voice increasing which undoubtedly took the Western composers a few centuries.<sup>38</sup> Circumstances changed significantly in the eighteenth century when the Ukrainian composers Maksim Berezovsky (c.1745 – 1777) and Dmytro Bortniansky (1751 – 1825) returned to the Royal Court Capella in Saint Petersburg after years of study in Italy. The experience and compositional artistry they shared with other Russian composers influenced the development of polyphonic writing and particularly the fugue, which was reflected primarily in choral music.

In 1833 – 1834 Mikhail Glinka (1804 – 1857) composed his fugues for piano. According to Protopopov, Glinka was particularly gifted in polyphonic writing, aiming to combine Western traditions of fugue writing with the principal folk elements distinctive for Russian music.<sup>39</sup> Glinka's exercises in contrapuntal writing resulted in a short cycle of *Three Fugues* (three-voice fugue in E flat major, double fugue in A minor and four-voice fugue in D major). The composer spent years attending harmony and fugue classes with Italian and German masters while travelling abroad, which demonstrated Glinka's broad interest in contrapuntal forms. He later integrated these skills in his compositional method based on the extensive use of folk elements. Looking beyond Glinka's piano works the application of contrapuntal technique can be detected in some of his vocal music as well as both operas; *A Life*

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<sup>37</sup> Protopopov V, *The history of Polyphony. Polyphony in Russian Music between 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century*, V.5, Moscow, Musyka, 1987, p.6.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p.6.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.59.



*for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, where combination of different types of imitations, canons and fugues demonstrated the composer's proficiency in the field of counterpoint.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the fugue became a model of generic counterpoint frequently employed by a number of Russian composers in their piano works. Experiments in polyphonic writing by Anton Rubinstein (1829 – 1894) are represented by the composer's *Six Fugues (in Style libre) followed by Preludes, Op.53*, written in 1856. The set of three- and four-voice fugues is built on major followed by minor key connections establishing a parallel with Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier*.

Inspecting the technically demanding textures in Rubinstein's fugues one can assume that the composer intended to create a set of virtuosic concert pieces using traditional contrapuntal form. However, Rubinstein's most valuable achievement in development of Russian contrapuntal music was initiating with his brother Nikolai Rubinstein a counterpoint and fugue course in the program of the newly opened Moscow and Saint Petersburg Conservatories.

Notably, the only time when Taneyev's composition teacher, Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893), used the fugue in his piano music was in *Six pieces on a single theme Op.21*, composed in 1873 and premiered by Anton Rubinstein the same year. The set of six character pieces opens with the *Prelude* and *Fugue* in G sharp minor. The key and resemblance of specific technical and structural elements with Taneyev's identically named composition will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Saint Petersburg Conservatory is connected with the name of Rimsky-Korsakov (1844 – 1908) whose output includes a number of polyphonic piano works written in 1875 – 1878. Experiencing deficiency of knowledge in the field of voice leading and its application in music of different genres, Rimsky-Korsakov taught himself the principal rules of counterpoint and writing fugues in 1874 – 1875. This evidently reflected in the list of piano works, which appeared in the following 1875 – 1878 years:

- *Fugue in C major for four hands* (arranged later for two hands), 1875;

- *Six Fugues Op.17*, 1875;
- *Fugues and Fughettas with no opus number*, 1875 – 1876;
- *Three pieces Op.15*, 1875 – 1876:
  - I. Waltz
  - II. Romance
  - III. Fugue
- *Six variations on the theme BACH Op.10*, 1878. The form of prelude and fugue is employed in the last two variations.

Writing in his *Complete Works* Rimsky-Korsakov describes his own achievements in contrapuntal music:

‘Technique has not become a part of my flesh and blood yet and I still cannot work with counterpoint naturally remaining myself without making a pretense’.<sup>40</sup>

As with Glinka, Rimsky-Korsakov also applied fugal and canonic forms extensively in his choral and operatic repertoire.

A number of preludes and fugues in the music of Alexander Glazunov (1865 – 1936), a student of Rimsky-Korsakov at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, doubtlessly complement the development of contrapuntal music in Russia. The majority of Glazunov’s piano music either demonstrates an employment of the traditional form of counterpoint or exhibits the presence of contrapuntal texture interrelated with other genres. These are the most prominent examples:

- *Prelude and Fugue in D minor Op.62*, 1899. In the fugue Glazunov implements the technique of bridging contrapuntal development of the main themes from the prelude and fugue (Figure 1a,b)<sup>41</sup> at the end of the whole work, uniting two contrasting melodies in joint voice leading passage octaves apart (Figure 1c):

**Figure 1a, Prelude, bb.1 – 9**

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<sup>40</sup> Rimsky-Korsakov N, *Complete Collected Works. Literary works and correspondence*, Moscow, Muzgiz, 1955, Vol.1, p.88.

<sup>41</sup> Music excerpts are taken from Alexandre Glazounow *Prelude et Fugue pour Piano Op.62*, Leipzig, M.P.Belaieff, 1899, pp.3, 6, 15.



**Figure 1b, Fugue, bb.1 – 5**



**Figure 1c, Fugue, bb.244 – 253**



Eleven years later Taneyev in his *Prelude and Fugue Op.29* employed this method, where the appearance of the prelude's main theme in the fugue turns into the essential structural element of the piece.

- *Piano Sonata in E minor Op.75, No.2*, 1902. The fugue in the finale is based on the main theme from the first movement and concludes the whole sonata cycle.
- *Prelude and Fugue in E minor*, 1914;
- *Four Preludes and Fugues Op.101*, 1918 – 1925.

It is important to acknowledge Glazunov's remarkable achievements in progressing with contrapuntal technique in symphonic and chamber music. His *Suite for String*

*Quartet Op.35* (1891), *Sixth Symphony* (1896) and *Fifth Quartet Op.70* (1898) are introduced with the fugue at the beginning of the cycle. Implementation of the fugue in this way distinguishes the composer's method from those of his predecessors and contemporaries, proving him to be a pioneer in this particular method of contrapuntal writing. There are similar approaches in the twentieth century Russian piano music by Nikolay Myaskovsky, a student of Rimsky-Korsakov and a colleague of Sergey Prokofiev. His *Piano Sonata in D minor Op.6, No.1* (1907) opens with the fugue, the main theme of which appears further in each of the four movements of the cycle with the rhythm, character and the key variations. This sonata was the subject of correspondence between Myaskovsky and Prokofiev in August 1911, justifying the importance of Taneyev's opinion and his competent appraisal of newly composed works:

‘I played your fugue from the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the First piano sonata to Taneyev. His positive reaction confirmed that it was approved’.<sup>42</sup>

The value of Glazunov's contribution to the contrapuntal achievements in Russian music is strengthened by Taneyev's appraisal indicated in his letter to Glazunov in November 1902.<sup>43</sup> Taneyev enthusiastically accepts that his own opinion of the young composers not having enough skills for using the formula of three- and four-voice canonic sequences as well as horizontally shifting melodies was incorrect. As a result Taneyev included an excerpt from Glazunov's *Seventh Symphony* (1902) in his fundamental treatise in order to demonstrate an application of two-voice horizontal-shifting counterpoint in Russian modern music.<sup>44</sup> Glazunov replied to Taneyev a few days later, confirming that he could only achieve the variety of contrapuntal techniques after meeting Taneyev and thoroughly studying his works, which he always admired.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Prokofiev and Myaskovsky, *Correspondence*, ‘Sovetskiy kompozitor’, Moscow, 1977 p.97.

<sup>43</sup> Protopopov V, *The history of Polyphony. Polyphony in Russian Music between 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century*, Vol.5, Moscow, Musyka, 1987, p.211.

<sup>44</sup> Taneyev S, *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style*, Moscow, Belaieff in Leipzig Publishers, 1909, p.301.

<sup>45</sup> Protopopov V, *The history of Polyphony. Polyphony in Russian Music between 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century*, Vol.5, Moscow, Musyka, 1987, p.211. [Three unpublished letters of A.K.Glazunov to S.I.Taneyev in the book *To the memory of Sergey Ivanovich Taneyev*, p.227].

Alumnus of the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, Anatoly Lyadov (1856 – 1914), expanded polyphonic piano repertoire with the following works:

- *Fugue in G minor* from *Six pieces for piano Op.3*, 1876 – 1877. This set also contains *Gigue*, representing a fugue by the form.
- *Three Canons for piano Op.34*, 1894;
- *Two Fugues for piano Op.41*, 1896;
- *Fugue on the theme of La Do Fa (Lyadov A.)*, 1913.

In the piano works listed above, Lyadov's intention to retrieve the traditions of contrapuntal writing founded by the masters of the eighteenth century can be identified through the choice of the musical forms, harmonic language and particular cadences.

Lyadov's contemporary, Sergey Lyapunov (1859 – 1924), who studied contrapuntal technique in the Moscow Conservatory with Taneyev, established himself with particularly skillful systematic use of canons and horizontal-shifting counterpoint in the following works:

- *Variation and Fugue on a Russian Theme Op.49*, 1912;
- *Little Fugue in C sharp minor* from *Three pieces for piano Op.57*, 1913;
- *Prelude and Fugue in B flat minor Op.58*, 1913;
- *Toccata and Fugue in C major*, 1920.

These are principal examples of polyphonic pieces by Russian composers who were responsible for the development of the contrapuntal music from Glinka to Taneyev. Some of them expose the imitation of Baroque style, and particularly of Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier*, in terms of both subjects and techniques lacking any particular individuality. It could be argued that these composers did not intend to create a major work through such pieces, but rather to experiment in this area and acquire a mastery of polyphonic technique. Others created the conditions for the fugue to become an independent concert piece with a distinctive musical language and complex dramaturgy.

## 2. Fugue in Taneyev's piano works

Taneyev's lifelong dedication to voice leading resulted in the composer's regular employment of the fugue as a model of generic counterpoint. Exercises in the form of fugue served as an essential component in the class of composition and counterpoint during Taneyev's teaching years both in the Conservatory and as a private tutor. However, Taneyev contributed to general piano repertoire by only writing two fugues. *Fugue in D major* is one of the earliest works of a young composer newly appointed as a teacher of harmony and instrumentation at the Moscow Conservatory whereas *Fugue in G sharp minor* constitutes Taneyev's recognized work *Prelude and Fugue Op.29* representing the maturity of his compositional style.

### 2.1. *Fugue in D major, 1879 (unpublished)*

Following Taneyev's graduation from the Moscow Conservatory in 1875 a remarkable period of the composer's intensive study of contrapuntal techniques in the strict style became more evident. Selected correspondence between Taneyev and his former teacher Tchaikovsky from 1870 – 1880 indicated the young composer's intention to practise in writing exercises in the strict style in order to incorporate this technique in the works he conceived, particularly in string ensembles.<sup>46</sup>

Assuming Taneyev used his own compositions as an experimental platform for his theoretical achievements, the appearance of the *Fugue in D major* in April 1879 could not become more appropriate. This four-voice piece represented the deployment of a straightforward melody pursuing the traditions of the baroque period. In my recording (Taneyev *Fugue in D major*, live performance) I was aiming to emphasise the purity and accessibility of the fugue's overall structure exhibiting an appearance of the main subjects in the exposition, post-expositional body and final section with traditional cadences. The manuscript of the fugue can be found in Appendix One (p.i). The transparency of the harmonic background is justified by Taneyev's approach to represent eleven subject entries in the fugue with five of them appearing in D major and the same number of entries in the dominant key of A major. Applying *stretto*

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<sup>46</sup> P.I.Tchaikovsky and S.I.Taneev. *Letters*, Ed. by Zhdanov V. A, Moscow, Goscultprosvetisdat, 1951.

three times Taneyev balanced two main keys as well as neutralised the conflict between tonic and dominant, infusing a particularly consonant tone to the whole piece. Clear harmonic background allows the performer to concentrate on effortless interpretation of each voice in sustained invariable character. A single exception of a modified theme's entry in the subdominant key of G major underlines the composer's purpose of applying only relative keys.

While studying Taneyev's fugue I utilised Schenkerian analysis (Appendix Two, pp.i – iii).<sup>47</sup> Applying the Schenkerian method deviated from my intention of demonstrating the originality of an interpretation. Following Taneyev's recommendation, it is feasible to achieve the full essence of the piece with concise contrapuntal structure implementing the study of shifting counterpoint based on elementary mathematical calculations.<sup>48</sup> I recorded an alternative version of Taneyev's piece transferring the middleground reduction of Schenkerian analysis into performance aiming to illustrate the shift of the fugue's main structural accents (*Taneyev Fugue in D major*, Schenkerian middleground analysis). This recording demonstrates unexpected interpretation of the subject's phrasing and an overall lack of the balance between the four voices, which is essentially required in contrapuntal work. The emphasis of the principal scale degrees by prolongations and dynamic accents leads to the alteration of the initial gradually unfolding melody written in a straightforward rhythmical pattern (please compare bb.1 – 4 of the original score with the same bars in the middleground and background reductions). Typical development of the melody line towards its culmination (this applies to a separate subject as well as the whole section) is replaced in current interpretation by bridging the principal scale degrees I, III, IV and V, uniting individual tones of different subjects between each other as well as more distant sections of the fugue. Realisation of this interpretation explains my choice of a faster tempo needed to demonstrate reductive technique applied in contrapuntal texture.

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<sup>47</sup> Schachter C, *Unfoldings: Essays in Schenkerian Theory and Analysis*, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp.239-259; Cadwallader A, Gagne D, *Analysis of Tonal Music: A Schenkerian Approach*, Oxford University Press, 1998.

<sup>48</sup> Taneyev S, *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style*, Moscow, Belaieff in Leipzig Publishers, 1909, p.350.

My discovery of the *Fugue in D major* in Taneyev's archive in Klin, unpublished and unperformed, may supplement the general awareness of the composer's piano repertoire as recorded by Joseph Banowetz.<sup>49</sup> This album consists of all published piano works by Taneyev including his *Theme and variations in C minor*, composed in 1874, where the last variation demonstrates four-voice fugue texture with an extensive use of *stretto* elements.

The *Fugue in D major* can serve as an independent introductory work considering its rhythmical clarity and narrative character. Alternatively, the *Fugue* can be performed prior to Taneyev's *Prelude and Fugue Op.29* deliberately establishing the contrast between the two piano works composed with over thirty years time difference. In my performance of both pieces successively the elementary technical requirements, unalterable pulse and occasional rhythmic pedal represented in the early *Fugue* matches demanding virtuosic passages incorporated with challenging rhythmic findings of the *Prelude and Fugue*.

## **2.2. *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp Minor Op.29***

Taneyev as a composer devoted most of his time to orchestral, choral and chamber music. There are, however, a number of piano works, most of which were composed during his student years and published posthumously:

- *Sonata in E flat major*, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, unfinished, 1873 – 1874;
- *Five Scherzos* in E flat minor, D minor, C major, F major, G minor, 1874 – 1875;
- *Andantino semplice*, 1874;
- *Theme and Variations in C minor*, 1874;
- *Fugue in D major*, unpublished, 1879;

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<sup>49</sup> Joseph Bahowetz, *Sergei Ivanovich Taneyev*, Toccata Classics, 2000. This CD includes the premiere recording of Taneyev's two movements of his Piano Concerto in E flat major.



- *Three pieces: Quadrille, March, and Repose*, 1879 – 1880;
- *Three Preludes*, only one of which has survived, 1891;
- *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, 1910.

It is important to examine Taneyev's *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, dated 1910, standing apart from other works with its complexity of musical language and intensity of technical tasks. Rachmaninov, as well as other Taneyev's contemporaries who greatly admired this set, performed it all over the world, considering this work as 'extremely valuable'.<sup>50</sup>

The analysis of Taneyev's *Prelude and Fugue* suggests similarities with Tchaikovsky's work of the same name and key written in 1873. Both composers employed similar musical features based on separate motives and specific interval connections between the main themes of the *Prelude and Fugue*, but using different tempos and characters.

This resemblance of the opening melodic motives in Tchaikovsky's *Prelude and Fugue* is shown in Figures 2a,b:<sup>51</sup>

**Figure 2a: Tchaikovsky, Prelude, bb.1 – 3**



**Figure 2b: Tchaikovsky, Fugue, bb.1 – 3**



<sup>50</sup> Korabelnikova L, *The musical inheritance of S.I.Taneyev*, Moscow, Muzyka, 1986, p.187.

<sup>51</sup> Music excerpts are taken from P.Tschaikovsky *Six Morceaux pour le piano*, Op.21, St.Petersburg: W.Bessel & Cie, n.d, pp.2, 4.

The opening phrases from Taneyev's *Prelude and Fugue* demonstrate the unity of descending diminished sevenths appearing as the main feature of the prelude's accompaniment part and in the passage of semiquavers in the second half of the fugue's first bar, as well as ascending sixths, emerging twice in the opening phrase of the right hand melody in the prelude and in the fugue's initial passage of semiquavers (Figures 3a,b):<sup>52</sup>

**Figure 3a: Taneyev, Prelude, bb.1 – 2**



**Figure 3b: Taneyev, Fugue, bb.1 – 2**



Taneyev's archive in Klin contains numerous drafts of the *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor*, from which it can be derived that the composer made significant changes to the main themes of the piece before they were finalised.

The opening of the prelude introduces a dialogue between two hands with different voices moving most of the time in opposite directions, as though confronting each other. It is notable that one of Tchaikovsky's romances *Strashnaya minuta* (*Fearful minute*) presents a melody line developing similarly to one in Taneyev's prelude (Figure 4):<sup>53</sup>

**Figure 4: Romance Strashnaya minuta, bb.1 – 4**

<sup>52</sup> Music excerpts are taken from Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, Moscow: Muzgiz, 1944, pp.2, 5.

<sup>53</sup> Music excerpt is taken from P.I.Tchaikovsky: *Complete Collected Works, Vol.44*, Moscow, Muzgiz, 1940, p.206.



A performance of this prelude requires particular focus on the left-hand part, which predominantly leads the harmonic argument, taking the continuous bass line through apparently unrelated keys: E major, E minor and F minor (Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, bb.10 – 12, 00:40'), C sharp major and A major (bb.16 – 17, 01:03'), D flat major and C major (bb.26 – 30, 01:37'). This motivated me in the performance to construct the harmonic vertical core of the prelude accentuating its bass line dynamically and functionally. The only time when the two voices meet and move together towards the same idea is the culminating *Maestoso*. This climax becomes even stronger because of its appearance in the remote key of C major – a feature that occurs in the draft as well as in the final version (Appendix One, p.vi). At the same time, the composer's method of searching within tonalities assisted me in understanding the piece's character, where fragility and suffering become the main qualities of its emotional state.

The fugue has in many ways an overall structure of a typical Baroque fugue invested with innovative harmonic language and rhythmical features. A laconic and purposeful subject in G sharp minor is followed by a real answer in the dominant. The exposition of the fugue is traditional, the only exception being the countersubject's entry in the middle of the subject itself, not only in the exposition, but also throughout the fugue. Therefore, the simultaneous introduction of two essential contrasting characters encouraged me to distinguish the technical and articulation tasks in individual voices from the first bars of the fugue (Figure 5):<sup>54</sup>

**Figure 5: Fugue, bb.1 – 8**

<sup>54</sup> Music excerpt is taken from Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, Moscow, Muzgiz, 1944, p.5.



The presence of semiquaver triplets in the opening bar of the fugue's subject followed by a descending chromatic passage suggests a resemblance to the *Fugue* in D minor from the second book of Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier*. It is not only the subject's shape that unites the two but also the rhythmic contrast between subject and countersubject (Figure 5a):<sup>55</sup>

**Figure 5a: Fugue, bb.1 – 4**



Taneyev's experimentation with rhythm and harmony becomes more descriptive as the work develops. Thus, in the first few bars the countersubject enters with the duplets against the triplets of the subject and the episodes are filled with peculiar syncopations. The post-expositional part of the fugue exemplifies the combination of mostly distant keys, triple *stretto* and appearances of the countersubject simultaneously with the subject rhythmically contradicting each other. *Prelude and Fugue* reaches its culmination in the fugue's final section with the already familiar C

<sup>55</sup> Music excerpt is taken from J.S.Bach *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, Book 2, Leipzig, Edition Peters, 1971, p.32.

major *Maestoso* (Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, 01:51' and 05:48'), bridging it with the prelude's culmination in the same key (Figures 6a,b):<sup>56</sup>

**Figure 6a: Prelude Maestoso, bb.29 – 31**



**Figure 6b: Fugue Maestoso, bb.103 – 105**



After this point, none of the thematic ideas exist in their original form or length, but are cut into different motives appearing in numerous *stretto* entries. At the same time every episode has an influence of the main theme and includes one or more elements from the subject.

Amongst the details of Taneyev's overall conception of the *Prelude and Fugue* are the monothematic elements that unite the two. Both pieces start with the same interval – the seventh – but in a totally different configuration. In the prelude this interval forms part of a piteous ascending motive; in the fugue it is a descending seventh replete with scales inspiring the pianist to imitate an anguished cry. While practising the piece I considered the frequent appearances of the diminished seventh as almost a leitmotiv in the composition. It helped me to interpret it in the prelude as a motive with a feeling of uncertainty or searching (Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, sudden tempo and dynamic change in b. 36, 02:17'), but in the fugue to achieve an extremely confident, at times even threatening sound of this diminished interval (bb.64 – 71, 04:50').

<sup>56</sup> Music excerpts are taken from Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, Moscow: Muzgiz, 1944, pp.4, 13.

A further recurring element in both prelude and fugue is the dotted rhythm. In the first bar of the prelude it appears as a pathos-imbuéd *lamento* element; in the fugue the same dotted rhythm becomes very categorical and resolute. In both cases, the dotted rhythm develops throughout each piece in accordance with the character of the prelude and fugue separately. Taneyev also enriches *Op.29* with a great rhythmic flexibility in both the melody and accompaniment, using the wide range of each voice and the full length of the keyboard.

Although the work demonstrates the presence of traditional elements distinctive of the contrapuntal writing of Taneyev's predecessors, an original approach of the composer in *Op.29* becomes evident through the analysis of the harmonic language and melodic features. The exploitation of various tonality modes, types of key relations as well as the method of modulating that characterises Taneyev's late period, becoming particularly challenging from the performance perspective.

An extensive use of scales in various tonal modes appears as one of the most frequent features of the piece. Implementation of the harmonic and melodic modes of minor as well as the chromatic scale occurs as Taneyev's typical melody feature, whereas the Lydian mode in b. 27 of the prelude, (Figure 7a),<sup>57</sup> in addition to the harmonic major in b.57 and bb.106 – 107 of the fugue, (Figures 7b,c) increases the tension of the development process and generates the necessity for the performer to search for a particular sound colour:

**Figure 7a: Prelude, Lydian mode, bb.27 – 28**



<sup>57</sup> Music excerpts are taken from Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, Moscow, Muzgiz, 1944, pp.4, 9, 13.

**Figure 7b: Fugue, harmonic major, bb.57 – 59**



**Figure 7c: Fugue, harmonic major, bb.106 – 108**



The juxtaposition of distant keys within one or two bars (Prelude: G sharp minor – A major, bb.6 and 7; E major – E minor – F minor bb.10 – 12; D major – C sharp major bb.14 and 15, C sharp major – A major b.16; Fugue: E major – E minor b.57) in addition to the exploitation of enharmonic relationships (Prelude: C sharp – D flat bb.18 and 19, G sharp – A flat bb.22 and 23) can be considered as the predominant method of modulating in the piece.

There are two extraordinary places in the post-expositional part of the fugue evincing the application of the remote keys in combination with triple *stretto* and the appearance of the subject and countersubject simultaneously (Figures 8a,b):<sup>58</sup>

**Figure 8a: Fugue, remote keys in combination with triple stretto. B flat minor – D flat major – E major, bb.84 – 88**

Allegro vivace e con fuoco

<sup>58</sup> Music extracts are taken from Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, Moscow, Muzgiz, 1944, pp.13, 14.



***Figure 8b: Fugue, remote keys, C minor – B flat minor – G sharp minor, bb.95 – 97***



Every time the subject's fragment appears in different voices and new keys it requires from the pianist an instantaneous wrists-adjustment according to the position on the piano. Occurring jumps should not distract the performer's attention from each beginning of the subject. Thus, practising this section with an accentuation of the first note, as indicated in Figure 8a, assisted me in achieving the finger-fluency and rhythmic stability I desired (Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, 05:22').

According to the Russian theoretician F.Arzamanov:



‘One of the biggest Taneyev’s achievements in the field of harmony and composition was his method of modulating’.<sup>59</sup>

Taneyev’s conviction was that every piece has to have a variety of modulations and deviations, but only in accordance with the general development of that piece.<sup>60</sup> In Taneyev’s opinion the leading key (not necessarily the main key in which that work was written) has to give the sense of bringing together the whole piece as a logical completion in a harmonic sense.

A notable component distinguishing Taneyev from his contemporaries is the number of marks written by the composer himself. They include not only prevalent tempo marks but also the ones that appeal to the character of this piece – *cantabile, dolce, espressivo, stretto, con forza, pesante, veloce, con duolo, marcatissimo, leggero, una corda, risoluto, ben accentuare, agitato* and *impetuoso* – assisting the pianist to transform a well-structured contrapuntal composition into an effectively technical concert piece.

Alongside harmonic experimentations and various instances of horizontal- and vertical-shifting counterpoint, this fugue challenges the performer with demanding technical passages, the overcoming of which can be achieved from my own experience by continuous application of Taneyev’s original exercises analysed in detail in the following chapter.

Since its premiere in Moscow on the 12th of October in 1912 by Taneyev’s student Nikolay Orlov the *Prelude and Fugue* has occupied its own important place in piano literature featuring in the repertoires of Vladimir Ashkenazy, Olga Kern and Lilya Zilberstein, among others.

### **3. Implementation of the fugue in piano and chamber works of Taneyev, his students and successors**

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<sup>59</sup> Arzamanov F., *S.I. Taneyev – Teacher of the course of music forms*, Moscow, Musgiz, 1963, p.109.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p.110.

Due to its polyphonic nature, the piano became an appropriate instrument for a number of Russian composers to realise their experimental ideas in correspondence with the social and political turmoil at the turn of the twentieth century. The implementation of the musical conception employing the application of *Invention* or *Fugue* as an example of polyphonic compositional technique in combination with other genres became a frequently occurring fact. And on the basis of his openness to experimenting with texture, harmony and rhythm, Taneyev became the source of support and inspiration for many composers working on specific piano repertoire with strong contrapuntal elements.

Evidence of Taneyev's influence on his students and colleagues can be traced through their personal correspondence. One of the letters between Myaskovsky and Prokofiev in 1911 demonstrates this:

‘Studying the *Convertible counterpoint*... of Taneyev. Will be working on it even more later this autumn, suggesting to you doing the same – piquantly and very useful, not just useful but necessary’!<sup>61</sup>

This reveals the importance of professional and personal relationships between the composer, his colleagues and compatriots. Thoroughly surprised to become a dedicatee of Taneyev's *Piano Trio Op.22*, Grechaninov, a student of Taneyev in composition, wrote to his teacher a letter demonstrating his admiration and gratitude.

The following letter of Taneyev to Mytrofan Belyayev, the founder of the publishing company *M.P.Belaieff* in Leipzig, indicates Taneyev's influence in Russian music society at the turn of the twentieth century (from November 12, 1903):

‘Thinking about Medtner's remarkable talent as a composer I decided to introduce him to you and recommend his works for your estimation. I would really like his pieces to become well known in the circle of prominent composers not only in Moscow but also in St. Petersburg’.<sup>62</sup>

Application of contrapuntal technique in different genres, interrelation of separate themes within the same piece and the use of specific intervals characterise the majority of Taneyev's works, constituting key aspects of his compositional method.

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<sup>61</sup> Prokofiev and Myaskovsky, *Correspondence*, Moscow, Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1977, p.99.

<sup>62</sup> Medtner N, *Correspondence*, Moscow, Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1973.

The employment of a similar strategy by his students and contemporaries as well as its impact on the performance of particular repertoire will be analysed in the following examples and exhibited in recorded lecture-recital.

***3.1. Evidence of Taneyev's contrapuntal technique and compositional method in the works of Medtner, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Grechaninov and Yevseyev***

**3.1.1. Fugue in the final movement of the cycle**

Despite the importance of contrapuntal writing to Taneyev, fugue does not appear frequently in his output as a complete work. However, his method of integrating fugal material within different movements of a cycle was used extensively among other composers of the Russian piano school at the beginning of the twentieth century, such as Medtner, Grechaninov, Stravinsky and Prokofiev among others. Analysis of related repertoire of Russian composers of Taneyev's period and beyond reveals a unifying idea of representing the fugue in the final movement of a cycle.

Whether fugue or invention appears as a separate movement or a fragment of sonata form, it requires an awareness of the main musical material and its involvement in contrapuntal development presented in a particular section of the composition. My practice of selected works with strong contrapuntal elements is divided into four phases:

1. Examination of the whole piece structure and a definition of the fugue's position in the general context;
2. Analysis of the fugue revealing thematic and harmonic background of the polyphonic section;
3. Isolation of the part with contrapuntal writing in order to scrutinise separate voices and improve the technical quality of the performance;
4. Final adjustment of the performance directions once the work has been performed on stage. Common features such as fingering and tempo adjustment among others may seem to be well defined but at the same time may require certain revision after the piece has been introduced to the audience.

The performer's physical and emotional determination should coextend in response to the practical demands of contrapuntal texture, such as rhythmical strictness, knowledge of harmonic background as well as the position of the fugal part in the overall structure.

Appearing in the last movement of a composition, the fugue is frequently required to appear conclusive in accumulating the ideas of the entire piece and directing the musical material towards the principal culmination of the whole structure in the piece.

Between 1874 and 1906 Taneyev used fugal textures in the final movements of several chamber and piano pieces primarily written in sonata form, excluding *Theme and variations for piano in C minor* (1874), where the twelfth variation concludes the cycle with the four-voice fugue.

In the *String Quartet in C major Op.5, No.2* (1894 – 1895) the fugue appears at the end of the fourth movement, where both main themes of the same movement are involved in the fugue's subject and countersubject.

Similarly, the *String Quintet in C major Op.16, No.2* (1904) introduces fugue into the final fourth movement. Three subjects of this triple fugue develop the main themes from the first and the fourth movements of the quintet, uniting the cycle.

In the fugue from the finale of the *Piano Quartet in E major Op.20* (1906) Taneyev adopts the main theme from the same movement in various combinations. The composer's intention of using the subject in augmentation and inversion, appearing frequently in *stretto* entries, exhibits Taneyev's masterful contrapuntal technique.

The fugue interrelated with other genres was also employed by Stravinsky in his piano works. The composer's *Piano Sonata (1924)* represents a three-movement cycle paying an apparent tribute to contrapuntal traditions. Stravinsky's rival Prokofiev wrote in his letter to Myaskovsky in August 1925 after hearing the newly written composition:

‘Stravinsky has written a dreadful sonata, which he plays himself with a certain chic. The music is Bach but with pockmarks’.<sup>63</sup>

Written in the form of an invention, the final movement is based on a combination of unusual harmonic and rhythmic characteristics arranged in a traditionally structured form. The invention’s principal feature is an employment of the main theme in numerous *stretto* entries with repeated use of augmentation. Stravinsky exploited the frequent appearances of the main musical material by applying contrapuntal texture in the movement. This sonata will be analysed in more detail in this chapter, reflecting Taneyev’s influence on the compositional technique of his contemporaries, as well as in Chapter Three, in the context of practice and performance strategies.

In the *Concerto for Two Solo Pianos* (1935) Stravinsky employed polyphonic writing in a more sophisticated way. The composer demonstrated that allocating the prelude and fugue in the final movement could appropriately contribute to the climax of a four-movement cycle.<sup>64</sup> Stravinsky’s attitude to his own piece and aspiration to perform it becomes evident from his own words:

‘My favourite among my purely instrumental pieces. Maybe I will play it on my tour if I feel able to do it’.<sup>65</sup>

One of Taneyev’s students Alexander Grechaninov used the technique, analogous to Stravinsky’s *Piano Sonata* (1924), in his *Sonatina in F major Op.110, No.2* written in 1927. This piano piece consists of three movements with the invention appearing in the form of a sonatina placed in the finale, which will be exemplified in Chapter Three in the context of Taneyev’s original exercises and their application in practice. Technically demanding for the pianist, the invention represents structurally and rhythmically strict recitation, which follows the spirited first movement and unhurried Menuet.

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<sup>63</sup> Joseph C, *Stravinsky and the Piano*, Michigan, UMI Research Press, 1983 p.165. [V. Stravinsky and Craft, Pictures and Documents, p.259].

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p.282. An analysis of this piece by Charles M. Joseph revealed that Stravinsky intended initially to write a three-movement cycle where the prelude and fugue was supposed to be preceded by four variations. However, either version of the concerto’s structure would establish the prelude and fugue as the movement responsible for the conclusive functions.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p.209. [*Stravinsky and Craft, Dialogues*, p.75].

The statement of fugal texture occurring as a part of sonata form can be revealed in several piano works by another Taneyev student Nikolay Medtner. His *Piano Sonata in F minor Op.5* has a four-movement structure, where the development section of the finale opens with a fughetta based on the main theme of the current movement. After playing this sonata to Taneyev in 1903 Medtner wrote to his brother Emil:

‘I visited Taneyev recently to play my sonata *Op.5* to him. Receiving his overall approval Taneyev suggested that some parts of a newly written piece are ready to be published at once’.<sup>66</sup>

Medtner’s sonata serves as an example of thematic interrelation discussed further in this chapter, as well as demonstrating instances of the practice process in Chapter Three.

### **3.1.2. Principal themes of the piece in contrapuntal development**

Taneyev’s expertise in voice-leading allowed him to create complex precedents of various theme-combinations which were developed contrapuntally. The use of different themes of the same piece in simultaneous motion featured in the works of Taneyev’s predecessors in Russia, however this technique, applied extensively by Taneyev, became one of the principal features of his compositional method.<sup>67</sup> Technically all themes maintain their individuality retaining their harmonic combinations clearly and unaffectedly, which allows for the presence of horizontal and vertical-shifting counterpoint adjusted according to the composition’s form. Various pieces by Taneyev indicate the application of this technique with an additional common feature; it predominantly appears in the final movement, responding to the purpose of unifying not only musical material of a particular movement but of the whole cycle.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Medtner N, *Correspondence*, Letter of Nikolay Medtner to his brother Emil Medtner from 22 October 1903, Moscow, Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1973.

<sup>67</sup> Alexander Borodin applied the method of introducing different themes of the piece in contrapuntal development in his opera *Prince Igor* and the *First Quartet*.

<sup>68</sup> *String Quartet Op.5, No.2* (1894-95) – fugue in the finale is based on the two main themes of the same movement occurring as the subject and countersubject; *Piano Quartet in E major Op.20* (1906) – interrelation of the two main themes of the cycle in the fugue in the finale; *Piano Quintet in G minor Op.30* (1911) – coda of the finale demonstrates the combination of reversed 1<sup>st</sup> theme from the first movement with the 1<sup>st</sup> theme from the fourth movement.

Among other works, Taneyev's *String Quintet in C major Op.16, No.2* can rightfully be considered as the most descriptive example of how the main thematic material of the cycle is engaged in contrapuntal development. The triple fugue in the last movement accumulates principal characters of the piece, gradually introducing every subject entry responding to the dramaturgical conception of the quintet. Developing accordingly to every theme's character in the culmination of the fugue, all three subjects unite with calculative precision, an essential and inherent quality of Taneyev's compositional method.

In Taneyev's *Prelude and Fugue Op.29* interpreted earlier in this chapter one can identify a conscious relationship. Following the composer's intention of uniting two pieces by employing identical chord progressions in the same key of C major, Taneyev extended his idea of an overall connection with contrapuntal presentation of the fugue's subject against the dotted rhythmical pattern that appeared initially in the prelude's bb.17 and 21 (Figure 9a).<sup>69</sup> In my lecture-recital (06:50') I illustrate how the latter went through this transformation by changing from an introspective and sensitive motive in the prelude into a relentless and resolute statement in bb.110 – 112 in the fugue leading towards the conclusive section of the set (Figure 9b):

**Figure 9a: Prelude, bb.16 – 21**



<sup>69</sup> Music excerpts are taken from Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, Moscow, Muzgiz, 1944, pp.3, 13.

**Figure 9b: Fugue, bb.109 – 114**



Taneyev's intention of choosing contrapuntal texture as the principal compositional technique in the works of different genres creates the link with his original contrapuntally oriented exercises. An examination of *On the subject of piano technique* and *5-finger exercises* discussed particularly in Chapter Three, allows us to find an alternative practice approach in improving the performance of the main melodic material of the piece presented in contrapuntal development.

An analysis of particular sections of Medtner's *Piano Sonata in F minor Op.5* allows mentioning this piece in a related context. The composer demonstrates the movements' integrity by introducing two main themes from the first and the fourth movements collaborating in contrapuntal motion of the fughetta placed in the finale of a four-movement cycle (Figures 10a, b, c and d):<sup>70</sup>

**Figure 10a: Piano Sonata Op.5, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, second subject, bb.34 – 39**



<sup>70</sup> Music excerpts are taken from N.Medtner *Sonate pour Piano Op.5*, Leipzig: M.P.Belaieff, 1904, pp.4, 27, 31.



**Figure 10b: Piano Sonata Op.5, Finale, first subject, bb.1 – 5**

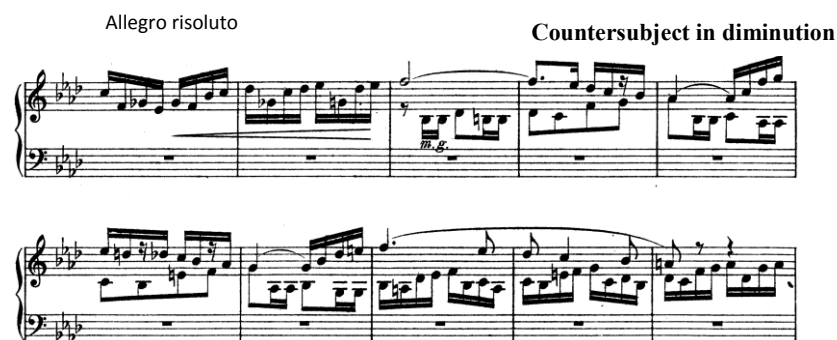


**Figure 10c: Piano Sonata Op.5, Finale, Fugue, bb.143 – 154**



Referring to Protopopov, Medtner intended to adjust both themes rhythmically and characteristically by diminishing the note-values of the second segment of the fugue's subject.<sup>71</sup> Notably, the countersubject appears first in its diminished version followed by the shape from the original entry in the first movement. Demonstration of the transformed texture and, as a consequence, pulse and articulation adjustment is presented in my recording of Medtner's sonata as well as in lecture-recital (08:48'):

**Figure 10d: Piano Sonata Op.5, Finale, Fugue, bb.155 – 164**

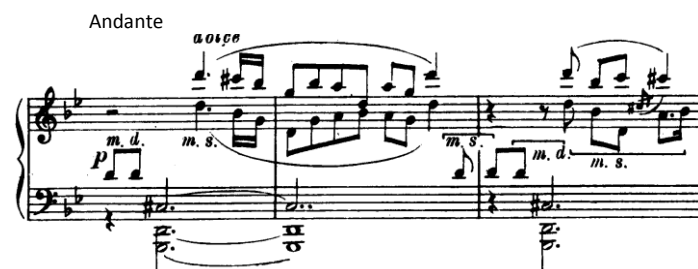


<sup>71</sup> Protopopov V, *The history of Polyphony. Polyphony in Russian Music between 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century*, V.5, Moscow, Musyka, 1987, p.290.

This is not an exclusive instance in Medtner's piano sonata. The characteristics of the interrelation of themes in the first movement will be comprehensively observed in the following chapter in the context of Taneyev's contrapuntally oriented exercises and illustrated in my lecture-recital.

Various forms of polyphonic textures and thematic interrelation applied by Prokofiev in his *Eighth Piano Sonata in B flat major Op.84* explain my referral to the musical examples of the composer beyond Taneyev's classroom. Following the idea of bridging two outer movements (Taneyev's use of culminations in his *Prelude and Fugue Op.29*) Prokofiev combines two contrasting themes in the quiet culmination of the final third movement in anticipation of the recapitulation's appearance (Figures 11a,b and c).<sup>72</sup>

**Figure 11a: Piano Sonata Op.84, No.8, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, second subject, bb.61 – 63**



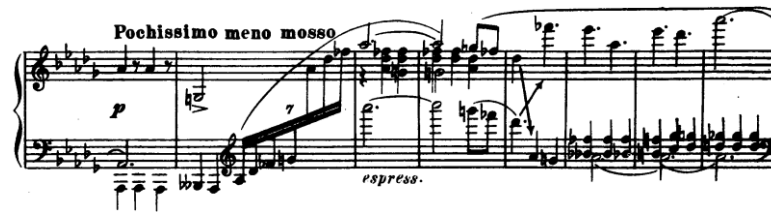
**Figure 11b: Piano Sonata Op.84, No.8, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, episode, bb.107 – 115**



The consistently repeating ostinato bass line emerges in the middle section of the final movement in the character of a ruthless and barbaric waltz. This then develops into the background of the second subject from the first movement, appearing as a reminiscence of its mysterious character with a further sense of imminence. In my interpretation of this episode I intended to demonstrate how two independent themes, interrelated in contrapuntal motion, sustain their principal technical and characteristic features (Lecture-recital, 10:33'):

<sup>72</sup> Musical excerpts are taken from *S.Prokofiev: Collected Works, Vol.2*, Moscow, Muzgiz, 1955, pp.208, 235, 240.

**Figure 11c: Piano Sonata Op.84, No.8, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, episode, contrapuntal combination of two themes, bb.289 – 296**



I refer to Prokofiev's sonata in the next chapter when demonstrating the application of Taneyev's *Exercises in Arpeggios* in practice.

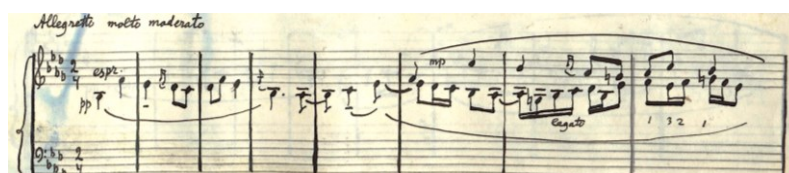
Interaction between the main themes of a large cycle can attract pianists' attention in the set of pieces composed by Taneyev's last student Sergey Yevseyev. As a result of studying counterpoint with particular concentration on the rules of fugue writing under Taneyev's supervision, Yevseyev created his cycle, *Polyphonic pieces on Russian themes Op.57*, years later, in 1948 – 1949. Each of the fifteen miniatures represented the development of a single theme with an individual rhythmic and harmonic language, based on straightforward imitations as well as more complex contrapuntal experiments. Frequently appearing elements unifying different parts of the set would not compete with an explicit instance of employing the same melody line in two contrasting compositions. Being introduced in No.5 *Duet* as a slow folk tune of a lyrical character in D minor, it reappears in the four-voice fugue No.13 *Duma (Thought)* in B flat minor engaged in numerous *stretto* entries and augmentations. In comparison to its first presentation, contrapuntal development of the main theme, in addition to the wide range of dynamics – between *ppp* and *fff*, and tempo alterations – *Allegro molto moderato*, *Piú mosso*, *Allargando* and *Sostenuto* among other performance directions, serves as the principal compositional feature in creating a complete program piece with the structure of the fugue (Figure 12a, b):<sup>73</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Musical excerpts are taken from the manuscript of *Polyphonic pieces on Russian themes Op.57*. Copied with the permission of the archive of the Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture in Moscow.

**Figure 12a: Duet, bb.1 – 11**



**Figure 12b: Duma, four-voice fugue, bb.1 – 8**



Apart from the first three miniatures – *Folk tunes, Folk dance* and *Meadow* – *Polyphonic pieces on Russian themes Op.57* is an unpublished cycle, the hand-written exemplar of which I found in the archive of the Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture in Moscow.

In my lecture-recital I demonstrate further examples of themes interrelation in different pieces from Yevseyev's polyphonic cycle (Lecture-recital, 12:31').

### **3.1.3. The application of diminished and augmented intervals**

One of the most representative compositional features observed in Taneyev's works is an extensive use of diminished and augmented intervals. Taneyev explained an essential technique of applying an augmented fourth and diminished fifth in composition complemented by their possible combinations in various voice leading examples in one of his treatises, referring mostly to the two-voice vertical shifting counterpoint but also mentioning the tritons appropriately in other parts of his work.<sup>74</sup>

An employment of selected augmented and diminished intervals in either main thematic material of the piece or as a strategically relevant motive of the development section can be recognised as a unifying element in a number of

<sup>74</sup> Taneyev S, *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style*, Moscow, Belaieff in Leipzig Publishers, 1909, p.44.

Taneyev's works, particularly in chamber and piano music.<sup>75</sup> Frequent appearances of such intervals demonstrate the composer's tendency of experimenting with unexpected melodic and as a consequence harmonic solutions. In his treatise Taneyev declared:

'In old times the composers of strict style thoroughly avoided augmented fourth and diminished fifth. However, application of the same intervals becomes one of the main sources of diverse harmonic combinations for the contemporary contrapuntists'.<sup>76</sup>

From the performance perspective, awareness of diminished and augmented intervals in the melody may affect rhythmical and dramaturgical accents in the whole piece. Applied as a motive in imitation sequence, or as a part of a complete melody, the performance of diminished and augmented intervals requires definite rhythmic concentration as well as an understanding of a detailed harmonic structure. An employment of Taneyev's *Exercises in Arpeggios* with particular emphasis on diminished and augmented triads observed in Chapter Three proves their suitability in this context alongside the development of the hands' stretching ability.

Continuous practice of selected piano works by Taneyev, Medtner, Stravinsky and Grechaninov revealed the necessity of adjusting particular performance requirements in accordance to specific interval's position and the context.

As discussed earlier in this chapter the diminished seventh appears in Taneyev's *Prelude and Fugue Op.29* not only as a motive constituting the main thematic material but also as an element strengthening the connection between two pieces of

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<sup>75</sup> *Theme and Variations for piano in C minor* (1874) – diminished fifths and sevenths throughout the theme and twelve variations; *String Quintet in G major Op.14, No.1* (1901) – the fugue's subject in the final movement contains diminished fourths; *String Quintet in C major Op.16, No.2* (1904) – a number of diminished fourths constitute the first theme of the third movement; *Piano Quartet in E major Op.20* (1906) – a piano part of the final movement is based on diminished fifths, transformed from the second segment of the main theme appeared initially as a perfect fifth; *Piano Trio in D major Op.22* (1908) – second subject of the first movement indicates the presence of augmented fourth; *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29* (1910) – extensive use of diminished sevenths in both pieces of the set; *Piano Quintet in G minor Op.30* (1911) – modulations to the distant keys of a diminished fourth in the first movement (from E flat minor to B minor) and diminished fifth in the third movement (from C major to G sharp minor) as well as the use of diminished fifths and fourths in the introduction of the final movement.

<sup>76</sup> Taneyev S, *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style*, Moscow, Belaieff in Leipzig Publishers, 1909, p.169.

the composition. The prelude's accompaniment line is based on a sequence of diminished sevenths altering constantly in consonance with the modulated keys. Together with occasionally occurring diminished fourths and sevenths in melodic phrases it requires the pianist's ability to crystalise the main harmonic combinations dissolved in numerous passages taking performer's attention away from the harmonic principal frame. The fugue's abrupt diminished seventh creates a significant contrast to the continuing prelude's accompaniment line once entered in the countersubject. Therefore, my fundamental concern, while practising the fugue, was achieving an accurate balance and rhythmical clarity of the three main voices emphasising an independence and development of every separate line.

My work on Medtner's *First Piano Sonata* assisted in revealing the composer's apparent intention of applying diminished and augmented fourths and fifths extensively in this four-movement cycle. Using these intervals in different context, Medtner skillfully integrated them into the melodic texture of all movements. Comparing the presentation of the main motive in the first movement's exposition (Figure 13a)<sup>77</sup> followed by its appearance in the development section (Figure 13b), one can notice that perfect fifth initially outlining the melody has finally converted into augmented fourth in bars 69 – 70 and 77 – 78, responding to the character transformation:

**Figure 13a: Piano Sonata Op.5, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, the main motive of the first subject,**

**b.1**



<sup>77</sup> Music excerpts are taken from N. Medtner *Sonate pour Piano Op. 5*, Leipzig: M. P. Belaieff, 1904, pp. 2, 6.

**Figure 13b: Piano Sonata Op.5, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, development section, bb.67 – 78**



Supported by a number of modulations, giving the music considerable portion of uncertainty, the main theme which appeared originally in unison one octave apart is no longer creating a continuous melancholic character but interrupted by staccato replicas in opposite hand (Medtner *Piano Sonata in F minor Op.5*, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, 05:30'). The development of this concept persistently leads to reappearance of the principal theme in recapitulation in bar 123 enriched with texture and volume contrasting its *tranquillo* exposition in the beginning of the movement (Figure 13c):<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Music excerpt is taken from N. Medtner *Sonate pour Piano Op.5*, Leipzig: M.P. Belaieff, 1904, p.9.

**Figure 13c: Piano Sonata Op.5, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, development section, bb.118 – 126**



The main melodic material of the sonata's second movement is based on a diminished fourth. It serves as an original ascending motive persistently repeating in nearly every bar (Figure 14a):<sup>79</sup>

**Figure 14a: Piano Sonata Op.5, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bb.1 – 10**



This movement's choral texture should be interpreted with well-articulated chords deliberately emphasising the occurrence of a specific interval in different parts of the bar, evidently considering composer's directions of *p* and *legatissimo*. Once the music reaches its climax in the transitional section leading to the third movement

<sup>79</sup> Music excerpt is taken from N. Medtner *Sonate pour Piano Op. 5*, Leipzig: M.P. Belaieff, 1904, p.16.



diminished fourth develops into an accelerated sequence of chords combined with the dotted rhythm (Figure 14b):<sup>80</sup>

**Figure 14b: Piano Sonata , Op.5, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bb.125 – 130**



The performer's interpretation of the transitional fragment may create an atmosphere of inevitability and desperation. The illustration of the excerpts from the sonata's second movement by Medtner is presented in my lecture-recital (17:13').

The third movement of the cycle is not an exception in Medtner's application of diminished and augmented intervals. Introduced in the transitional passage of the previous movement, dotted rhythm is combined with diminished fifth in the accompaniment of the main theme of *Largo* (Figure 15a):<sup>81</sup>

**Figure 15a: Piano Sonata Op.5, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bb.1 – 5**



The left hand's descending pattern is represented as an ostinato motive responsible for the phrase continuity and harmonic flexibility.

<sup>80</sup> Music excerpt is taken from N.Medtner *Sonate pour Piano Op.5*, Leipzig: M.P.Belaieff, 1904, p.20.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p.21.

A strategically significant episode filled with the chords based on diminished fourth appears again in the final *Moderato* of current movement in anticipation of the finale (Figure 15b):<sup>82</sup>

**Figure 15b: Piano Sonata Op.5, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bb.77 – 81**



Bridging different movements of the cycle, Medtner relies on a particular diminished interval in realisation of dramaturgically decisive task.

Subsequently, Medtner applies an analogous compositional technique in the finale. The fughetta in the development of the sonata's final movement examined earlier in this chapter demonstrates the presence of an ascending augmented fourth in the subject on several occasions (Figures 10c and 10d on p.48). Notably, the last entry of the subject in bass exhibits the replacement of the augmented fourth with a perfect fourth (Medtner *Piano Sonata in F minor Op.5*, 4<sup>th</sup> movement, 03:10') proclaiming an affirmative resolution of the whole section (Figure 16):<sup>83</sup>

**Figure 16: Piano Sonata Op.5, 4<sup>th</sup> movement, bb.77 – 81**



<sup>82</sup> Music excerpt is taken from N.Medtner *Sonate pour Piano Op.5*, Leipzig: M.P.Belaieff, 1904, p.26.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p.32.

Like the frequently appearing diminished sevenths in Taneyev's *Prelude and Fugue Op.29*, Medtner unites four movements of his sonata employing augmented and diminished fourths generously. Similarly to Taneyev's composition, these intervals in combination with rhythmical clarity and technical accomplishment assist in reflecting a variety of emotional states within the same piece.

My recorded repertoire represents an additional example related to the discussed context. Stravinsky in his *Piano Sonata (1924)* used the tritones extensively in the first movement. However, his technique proved to be distinctive to his contemporaries. Diminished fifths and augmented fourths are recognised here in the outline of the melody in the opening passage of C major (Figure 17):<sup>84</sup>

**Figure 17: Piano Sonata (1924), 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bb.1 – 9**



Following the composer's direction of *legatissimo*, the unison phrase two octaves apart is expected to be performed with somewhat improvisational approach, though with a strong sense of the melody's direction. However, referral to the evidence of Stravinsky's performance of his piece made by Charles M. Joseph suggests the contrary:

'Stravinsky's performance is, as might have been anticipated, extremely brittle. Even in the 'legatissimo' marked opening measures, the pianistic touch is far from being anything even remotely smooth'.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Music excerpt is taken from Igor Stravinsky *Sonate pour piano (1924)*, Edition Russe de Musique (S.et N.Koussewitzky), Boosey & Hawkes, p.2.

<sup>85</sup> Joseph C, *Stravinsky and the Piano*, Michigan, UMI Research Press, 1983 p.165.

When practicing Grechaninov's *Sonatina in F major Op.110, No.2* I realised that the principal melodic element constituting the invention's subject in the final movement is a diminished fourth (Figure 18):<sup>86</sup>

**Figure 18: Sonatina in F major Op.110, No.2, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bb.1 – 19**



Appearing as an ascending and descending interval in a precipitate passage it requires the pianist's immediate reaction on harmonic alterations without losing the control of pulse and articulation evenness. My interpretation of this episode is illustrated in the lecture-recital (20:27').

An alternative way of introducing augmented and diminished intervals by Taneyev and his contemporaries was their combination with the scale. Several representative instances are demonstrated in the lecture-recital:

- Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29* – the fugue opens with the subject where the descending scale outlines diminished seventh;
- Medtner *Piano Sonata in F minor Op.5, No.1* – the second movement's main theme is based on an ascending diminished fourth which appears in a contrary motion to the chromatic scale in opposite hand;
- Stravinsky *Piano Sonata (1924)* – the invention from the final movement introduces the subject, which includes ascending jumps of diminished sevenths filled with the short scale motives in contrary motion to the intervals.

<sup>86</sup> Music excerpt is taken from Alexander Grechaninov *2 Sonatinen Op.110*, London, Schott & Co, 1927, p.9.

The evolutionary process of the fugue in the Russian piano school can be traced through numerous music examples from Glinka to Taneyev and his contemporaries. Implementation of contrapuntal writing in piano compositions of non-polyphonic genres analysed in this chapter developed among Russian composers of the twentieth century partially as a result of Taneyev's indelible theoretical, pianistic and teaching activity. My work on selected piano repertoire by Taneyev and his adherents with application of Taneyev's original exercises discovered in composer's two substantial archives in Russia will be analysed and demonstrated in Chapter Three. It appears as a complement to a number of recorded piano works as well as a lecture-recital constituting a considerable part of my performance portfolio.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **Taneyev's piano exercises and their application in practice of selected piano repertoire by Medtner, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Grechaninov and Yevseyev**

Taneyev's theoretical treatises demonstrate his dedication to the study of harmony, music forms and strict counterpoint. Taneyev's compositional expertise can also be seen in his piano solo, chamber, vocal, orchestral and choral music as well as his opera *Oresteia*. Consequently, it might be expected that he would have left practical performance instructions based on his personal experience as piano professor at the Moscow Conservatory in 1881 – 1888, and as a concert pianist.

The expansion of technically demanding piano repertoire in the nineteenth century determined the necessity of particular virtuosic training for pianists. Numerous composers and piano pedagogues created cycles of studies to assist in the perfection of virtuosic skills, and where every individual piece responded to the development of particular technical task. The majority of existing exercises written by Cramer, Clementi, Moscheles, Czerny, Bertini, Heller, Hanon and Liszt among others aimed to strengthen the independence of each finger, prepare the performer for scales and arpeggio passages as well as emphasise the importance of practicing intervals, broken chords and octaves. Czerny in his *School of Fugue-Playing Op.400* introduced technical exercises combined with contrapuntal texture.<sup>87</sup> Common technical issues appearing in challenging rhythmic combinations are represented in twelve preludes and fugues. In the twentieth century the pianist Alfred Cortot produced his *Rational Principles of Pianoforte Technique*.<sup>88</sup> Alongside conventional technical exercises, one of the chapters was dedicated to intervals and polyphonic playing, with one hand introduced by two voices in a contrary motion followed by the combination of three rhythmically distinguished voices.

Taneyev's four unpublished hand-written documents found in Klin and Moscow in 2014 and 2015 allowed me to analyse several aspects of Taneyev's piano technique.

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<sup>87</sup> Czerny C, *School of Fugue-Playing Op.400*; Vienna: Diabelli & Comp, n.d.

<sup>88</sup> Cortot A, *Rational Principles of Pianoforte Technique*, New York, Oliver Ditson Company, 1928.

This included the involvement of the body and fingers in piano playing as well as the contrapuntal orientation of particular exercises:

- I. Gymnastic exercises for hands and body***
- II. On the subject of piano technique***
- III. 5-finger exercises***
- IV. Exercises in Arpeggios***

While working in the archives I discovered that Taneyev left no date indication in any of these documents. Analysing the exercises I realised they could be appropriately applied in daily practice once adjusted to the pianist's abilities and repertoire requirements.

In addition to the instructions given by Taneyev's predecessors, where the majority of technical issues that could potentially be found in piano repertoire are covered, the composer concentrated on particular technical elements by demonstrating every possible way of its application in practice, using all keys as well as dynamics, articulation and rhythmic variations.<sup>89</sup>

The polyphonic texture of Taneyev's selected exercises and his definition of phrasing determined my strategy in the preliminary stages of practising particular contrapuntal repertoire. The instances of application of Taneyev's exercises in my practice highlighted in this chapter as well as in my lecture-recital, demonstrate their effectiveness in solving various technical issues in piano works with strong contrapuntal elements by Medtner, Stravinsky, Grechaninov, Prokofiev and Yevseyev.

## **1. Gymnastic exercises for hands and body**

Taneyev gave a considerable number of guidance notes that can be applied to certain polyphonic repertoire to improve the technical ability and physical flexibility

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<sup>89</sup> Exercises and studies written in the nineteenth century include various types of scales, arpeggios, chords, octaves, intervals, repetitions, trills, sustained notes, pedalling and various rhythmic complications.

of the performer. His colleagues and friends admired his asceticism,<sup>90</sup> a way of living he adopted to live a long and fulfilled life.<sup>91</sup>

Taneyev's first manuscript *Gymnastic exercises for hands and body* (Appendix One, p.vii, translation – p.viii) can be explained by the composer's credo of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Divided into two sections this document describes various types of hand and body rotations, squatting as well as wrist and feet exercises, in addition to straightforward breathing technique. Taneyev occasionally mentioned the number of times a particular exercise should be repeated.

The exercises are lined up according to the strategy of warming up the whole body from head to feet, particularly emphasising on stretching the arms and wrists. As a result, physical exercises assist the muscles in becoming accustomed to regular hourly piano practice.

## **2. On the subject of piano technique**

This unpublished document explains in more detail Taneyev's thoughts about the significance of body posture and hand position as well as solving phrasing problems. The manuscript includes several of Taneyev's hand-written music excerpts and is divided into three sections: *Hand position* (Appendix One, p.ix, translation – p.xi), *Hand movement* (Appendix One, p.ix, translation – p.xi) and *Phrasing* (Appendix One, p.x, translation – p.xii).

### **2.1. Hand position**

This section focuses on the shape of the wrist and fingers freely grouped together. Taneyev emphasised the importance of the exact, almost unalterable distance

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<sup>90</sup> A student of Taneyev Alexander Goldenweiser recalled in his memoirs that his teacher prohibited smoking in his premises. To the surprise of a violinist Leopold Auer even Taneyev's former teacher and a colleague Tchaikovsky, an inveterate smoker, was not given an exception. *Sergey Ivanovich Taneyev* by Alexander Goldenweiser; Fetisova E, *Novoe o Taneyeve*, research and publishing center of Moscow conservatoire DECA-VS, Moscow, 2007, p.311.

<sup>91</sup> In the same memoirs Goldenweiser mentioned Taneyev's attitude to his age: 'When I was a young man I made a plan for the first fifty years of my life. Now, when I turned fifty, I can judge that everything from the list is achieved. As I strongly believe to live a hundred years it is time to program the following fifty.' Unfortunately, Taneyev died seven years later after this conversation. *Sergey Ivanovich Taneyev* by Alexander Goldenweiser; Fetisova E, *Novoe o Taneyeve*, research and publishing center of Moscow conservatoire DECA-VS, Moscow, 2007, p.315.



(unless the chords or octaves occur) between the outer fingers that pianists should employ with ease and precision during performance. I have applied this technique to a section of Stravinsky's 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of his *Piano Sonata (1924)*, written in the form of invention (Figure 19):<sup>92</sup>

**Figure 19: Piano Sonata (1924), 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bb.25 – 32**



The left hand continuous accompaniment is based on arpeggio passages, which first appeared in the main subject. This accompaniment provides an appropriate even background for the contrasting melody interrupted by the constant use of the rests. Together with the performance direction of *staccatissimo*, using a stable and relaxed wrist shape should control the evenness of the sound in the same voice throughout the entire section (Stravinsky *Piano Sonata (1924)*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, recorded in 2016, 00:25').

This directive was written by Taneyev as a general instruction for practising the majority of passages consisting of either scales or arpeggios which are used extensively in piano music in the context of contrapuntal technique. Pianists can benefit by applying this recommendation while practising particular pieces with the complexity of multitasking.

## **2.2. Hand movement**

In the second part of the manuscript Taneyev described the use of an octave technique, *staccato*, *legato* and *portamento* sound as well as invisible hand

<sup>92</sup> Music excerpt is taken from Igor Stravinsky *Sonate pour piano (1924)*, Edition Russe de Musique (S. et N. Koussewitzky), Boosey & Hawkes, p.15.

movements. Special attention is drawn to the short and resolute finger movements downwards, followed by a reflective jump off the keys with the piano mechanism involvement. I employed this directive in my performance of the final movement of Stravinsky's *Piano Sonata (1924)*.

The main subject covers a range of two octaves filled with semiquaver passages based on arpeggio elements and numerous unprepared jumps (Figure 20):<sup>93</sup>

**Figure 20: Piano Sonata (1924), 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bb.1 – 8**



Prior to my analysis of Taneyev's exercises, I performed this movement by emphasising numerous changes in the direction of the melodic line, which led to a considerably slower tempo. In order to achieve Stravinsky's metronome mark ♩ = 112 I started following Taneyev's instructions using precise and determined finger movements downwards while my wrist was flexible when stretching to the sides and adjusting its shape according to the passage's position. This allowed me to avoid unnecessary accents and unwanted rhythmical interruptions of the theme in the desired, stipulated tempo. In my performance portfolio I submitted two versions of Stravinsky's *Piano Sonata* recorded in 2012 and 2016. The first one was completed before my research on Taneyev's exercises commenced, whereas the second one demonstrates how different approaches to resolving technical issues are reflected in the variances of the interpretation.

Reconsideration of selected tempo marks, interpretation of the ornaments (particularly in the second movement of the piece) and concentration on specific fragments with contrapuntal elements resulted in the alterations in my interpretation of Stravinsky's sonata.

<sup>93</sup> Music excerpt is taken from Igor Stravinsky *Sonate pour piano (1924)*, Edition Russe de Musique (S. et N. Koussewitzky), Boosey & Hawkes, p.14.

In Stravinsky's recording of his cycle,<sup>94</sup> the crotchet beat speed is 96, which is slower than his indication in the score. There are other variances between the notation and the actual performance related to the articulation directions. These were perhaps altered by Stravinsky in his performance for the benefit of prominent shapes of the melody lines.

The suitability of this instruction in practising various piano works led me to its application in the final movement of Gracheninov's *Sonatina in F major Op.110, No.2*, written in the form of invention. Unifying elements in the structure and texture of this piece with *Piano Sonata (1924)* by Stravinsky mentioned above explain my choice of similar practice strategy.

The composer does not indicate detached articulation in the main subject of the invention (Figure 21),<sup>95</sup> however this movement's fast tempo and determined character of restless semiquaver passages suggest precise and abrupt finger movements:

**Figure 21: Sonatina in F major Op.110, No.2, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bb.1 – 19**



<sup>94</sup> Stravinsky's interpretation of his sonata was recorded by Creators - *Composers Playing Their Own Works at the Piano*, Vol. 4, tracks 7 – 9, (1921-1960), 2010.

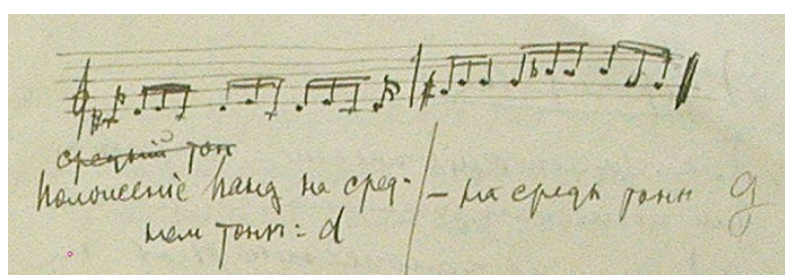
<sup>95</sup> Music excerpt is taken from Alexander Grechaninov *2 Sonatinen Op.110*, London, Schott & Co, 1927, p.9.

Frequent ascending and descending jumps in the melody together with occasionally occurring accents on the weak beats of bb.13 and 15 may create instability in the wrist shape. Hand elasticity appropriately used in combination with an instinctive fingers' jump off the keys recommended by Taneyev, helped me to avoid unnecessary fatigue of finger muscles and stiffness in the performance of this movement in fast tempo (Grechaninov *Sonatina in F major Op.110, No.2*, live performance, 04:25').

The application of Taneyev's hand movement technique in No.14 *Fairy Tale* from Yevseyev's *Polyphonic pieces Op.57*, is analysed in my lecture-recital (25:53').

One of Taneyev's principal focuses in this manuscript was related to the wrist position. In Figure 22 Taneyev indicated that an insignificant distance between black and white keys does not require wrist movability:<sup>96</sup>

**Figure 22: On the subject of piano technique: Hand movement**



Taneyev's writing in the first bar of the Figure 22 states that the wrist should stabilise on D (the first note of the triplet), where as in the second bar on G (the second note of the triplet). According to Taneyev, pianists should look for one key as the most comfortable supportive point for the wrist in order to avoid rhythmic instability and uneven sound. As stated in Taneyev's manuscript this recommendation is applicable for the trills and other examples of ornamentation.

The trill is one of the most frequently used melodic features in the second movement of Stravinsky's *Piano Sonata (1924)*. Employed by the composer in different parts of the phrase, the trills here vary by their length and functionality. Initial trills respond

<sup>96</sup> Copied with the permission of Taneyev's archive at the P. I. Tchaikovsky State House-Museum in Klin.

to the tranquillity of the opening phrase followed later by a particular ornamentation sequence concluding with fluent demisemiquaver passages (Figure 23).<sup>97</sup>

**Figure 23: Piano Sonata (1924), 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bb.1 – 4**



I considered Taneyev's recommendation of holding the wrist in a steady position when the trill appears in this movement as a part of two- or three-voice melody (Figure 24).<sup>98</sup>

**Figure 24: Piano Sonata (1924), 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bb.7 – 11**



<sup>97</sup> Music excerpt is taken from Igor Stravinsky *Sonate pour piano* (1924), Edition Russe de Musique (S.et N.Koussewitzky), Boosey & Hawkes, p.9.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p.10.

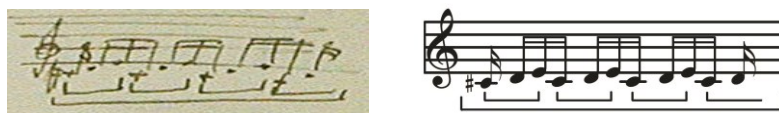
The character of the music suggests that the presence of the ornaments should not complicate the clarity of the melody or interrupt the continuity of the top line. The combination of immobile wrist with fluent fingers emphasised by Taneyev in his instructions creates ease and delicacy in the performance of the second movement (Stravinsky *Piano Sonata* (1924), 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, recorded in 2016, 00:53').

### 2.3. Phrasing

Taneyev clarifies the meaning of *phrasing* in musical and non-musical ways with examples of how alteration of a single note in the entire phrase can be reflected in the changing hand position (Figure 25a, b):<sup>99</sup>

**Figure 25a, b: On the subject of piano technique: Phrasing**

a)



b)

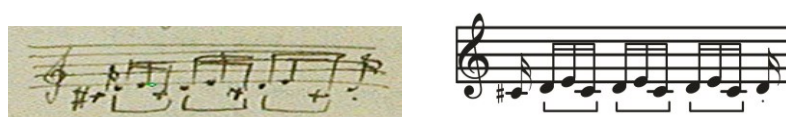
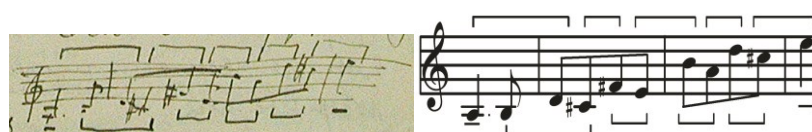


Figure 26 demonstrates an example of contrapuntal development within an elementary exercise:<sup>100</sup>

**Figure 26: Taneyev On the subject of piano technique: Phrasing**



By choosing the appropriate fingering, Taneyev isolates separate sound groups of the same melody, playing firstly the sequence of the upper voice notes solely, and then moving to the lower voice. Thus, every detached line practised separately as an

<sup>99</sup> Examples are copied with the permission of Taneyev's archive at the P. I. Tchaikovsky State House-Museum in Klin.

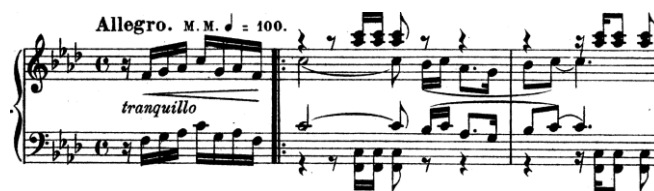
<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

independent sub-phrase appears to be an example of contrapuntal texture when joined in a complete melody.

When practising Medtner's *First Piano Sonata* I adapted this instruction according to the contrapuntal nature of the piece. After exhibiting the main themes of the first movement (Figure 27a, b),<sup>101</sup> the composer employed two elements of the first subject in combination with the second element of the second subject nearer to the end of exposition (Figure 27c):

**Figure 27a, b: Piano sonata Op.5, 1<sup>st</sup> movement**

**a) First subject, first and second elements, bb.1 – 2**



**b) Second subject, first and second elements, bb.34 – 39**



**c) Second subject, first and second elements, bb.46 – 51**

Allegro

<sup>101</sup> Music excerpts are taken from N.Medtner *Sonate pour Piano Op.5*, Leipzig: M.P.Belaieff, 1904, pp.2, 4.





While practising this section I isolated each pattern and worked on its original sound and shape. This enabled me to bring three melody lines with their individual characters together in one culminating phrase (Lecture-recital, 29:44').

An analysis of the exercises *On the subject of piano technique* demonstrates how the instructions can be applied in the practice of repertoire with various technical tasks, such as scales, arpeggios, octaves and different types of ornamentation, represented by contrapuntal texture in the piece.

### 3. 5-finger exercises

To maintain his virtuoso performance artistry, Taneyev spent hours every day refining his technical skills. In correspondence with Tchaikovsky in 1886, Taneyev wrote:

‘I still have to practise about six hours a day... I have to repeat some of the Liszt’s passages up to twenty times in order to achieve elegance and simplicity in the performance required from every piano virtuoso’.<sup>102</sup>

In addition to existing techniques, Taneyev started creating his own textbook of exercises, devised to resolve various technical issues in his playing. These exercises were written for multiple tasks of each hand grouped in the five-finger position.

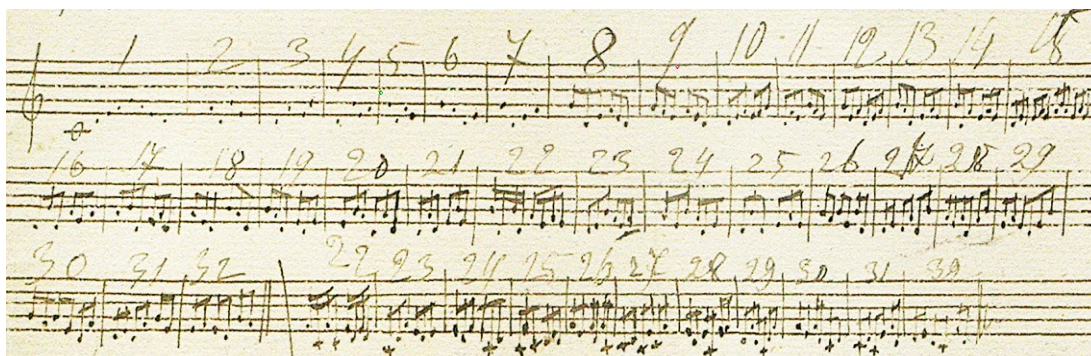
The example is given in C major (Appendix One, xiv) but I found it useful practising the exercise in all keys without changing the fingering (Figure 28).<sup>103</sup>

#### **Figure 28: 5-finger exercise (excerpt)**

<sup>102</sup> Tchaikovsky P.I., Taneyev S.I. *Letters*. Ed. by Vladimir Zhdanov Moscow, Goscultprosvetisdat, 1951, p.141.

<sup>103</sup> Copied with the permission of Taneyev’s archive at the P. I. Tchaikovsky State House-Museum in Klin.





By splitting the voices within one hand, Taneyev focused on the development of every finger independently as an effective preliminary stage of practising, prior to a performance of contrapuntal pieces.

After experiencing significant technical issues, such as lack of coordination and rhythmic disbalance in the post-expositional section of Taneyev's *Fugue* from his *Op.29* (Figure 29),<sup>104</sup> analysed earlier in Chapter Two, with five false *stretto* theme entries in bb.84 – 87, I found the application of this technique essential as it allowed me to achieve the required sound clarity in bars, which contain voice crossing without losing control of the pulse:

**Figure 29: Fugue, bb.83 – 88**



<sup>104</sup> Music excerpt is taken from Taneyev *Prelude and Fugue in G sharp minor Op.29*, Moscow, Muzgiz, 1944, p.13.

This extract, demonstrated in my lecture-recital (33:19'), responds to Taneyev's exploration of horizontal-shifting counterpoint in his treatise *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style*, where the composer defined canonic imitation as its indispensable attribute. Taneyev also declared that the melody's horizontal shift should not move by a whole bar, but by a half or a fraction of it. Frequent appearances of the main subject in the example above, thicken the texture and increase the tension in the development section of the piece. The harmonic and structural resolution occurs once the fugue reaches its culmination in C major, a distant key to the main G sharp minor.

Taneyev's 5-finger exercises became suitable for my practice of Stravinsky's *Piano Sonata (1924)*, particular sections of the second and the third movements of which were discussed earlier in this chapter (Figure 30).<sup>105</sup>

**Figure 30: Piano Sonata (1924), 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bb.12 – 18**



The middle section of its second movement suggests the necessity of multitasking in the right hand part with a sustained melody line in one voice over the background of short interrupted motives of demisemiquavers in the other, acting as an accompaniment. In my initial practice of this movement I was aiming to split two lines

<sup>105</sup> Music excerpt is taken from Igor Stravinsky *Sonate pour piano (1924)*, Edition Russe de Musique (S. et N. Koussewitzky), Boosey & Hawkes, p.10.

of the right hand part between two hands to create an imitation of a dialogue between different instruments. Taneyev's exercises improve the technical ability of each hand when embodying the contrapuntal texture in this section of sonata (Stravinsky *Piano Sonata (1924)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, recorded in 2016, 01:47').

In *5-finger exercises* Taneyev gives thirty-two short patterns, which have to be played over one sustained note, held by one finger. Frequent minor changes in every pattern require special attention and physical concentration of the pianist in order to maintain the appropriate fingers' activity under the motionless wrist. Respectively, practising these exercises can serve as a foundation prior to the performance of contrapuntally oriented pieces, particularly those with voice-leading examples within one hand part.

#### 4. Exercises in Arpeggios

According to the memoirs of Taneyev's students, he was involved in the production of two works by different authors. The *Guide of using piano pedal* by his colleague Alexander Bukhovzev was published in Moscow in 1886 and edited by Taneyev. The composer's influence is reflected in the questions of pedalling in connection with the components of music language and harmonic analysis as well as instances of pedalling in the episodes with polyphonic elements.

In addition, Taneyev's student, Jacob Weinberg, wrote *Encyclopaedia of piano technique*. Simultaneously studying piano with Konstantin Igumnov in Moscow Conservatory, Weinberg mostly referred in his manual for pianists to the lessons with Taneyev. In his *Encyclopaedia* Weinberg declared:

'I am grateful to my teacher Sergey Taneyev for everything I learnt in Moscow Conservatory'.<sup>106</sup>

Notably, in the Annex of Weinberg's other work *Principles of classification in piano technique*, the author inserts exercises in arpeggios based on Taneyev's original method. Taneyev's last student Sergey Yevseyev, who took private lessons in

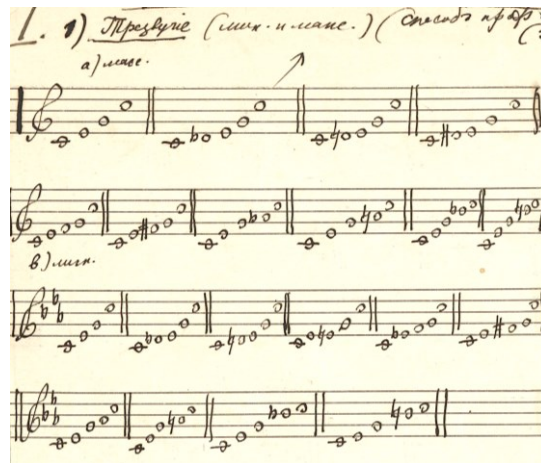
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<sup>106</sup> Taken from the manuscript of the *Encyclopaedia of piano technique* by Jakob Weinberg in the archive of The Glinka National Museum in Moscow.

counterpoint until the teacher's fatal illness, also recorded these exercises in his student notebook.<sup>107</sup>

In his *Exercises in Arpeggios* (Appendix One, p.xviii, translation – p.xix) Taneyev complicated arpeggios triads and their inversions by adding an extra note to the triads and turned them into four-note arpeggios of different types of modes (Figure 31).<sup>108</sup>

**Figure 31: Exercises in Arpeggios (triads)**



As a result, there could be 60 chords built from every note. New chords were intended to be played from each note and preferably with the fingering identical to C major arpeggios.<sup>109</sup> Taneyev encouraged his students to work on these arpeggios in a contrary motion, with contrasting dynamics, accentuating different notes as well as using various rhythmic variations, such as triplets, quintuplets, etc.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>107</sup> I found *Exercises in Arpeggios* in Yevseyev's *Student Notebook* (1913), in the archive of The Glinka National Museum in Moscow.

<sup>108</sup> Copied with the permission of the archive of the Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture in Moscow.

<sup>109</sup> Yevseyev S, *Student Notebook*, Moscow, 1913. Taneyev's archive of The Glinka National Museum in Moscow.

<sup>110</sup> Yevseyev S, *Memoires about Taneyev*, Moscow, 1940. Taneyev's archive of The Glinka National Museum in Moscow.

Numerous examples in the piano literature can justify the application of these exercises, either in their original form or with articulation and dynamic alterations. Stravinsky's *Piano Sonata (1924)*, given as an example of application of other Taneyev exercises earlier in this chapter, is not an exception with its first movement based on various arpeggio passages. I prefer, however, to demonstrate an excerpt from the development section of the third movement (Figure 32),<sup>111</sup> where the composer employed the left hand to perform three and four-notes arpeggios, coincidentally similar to those in Taneyev's exercises, but mostly with *staccato* articulation in both ascending and descending directions (Lecture-recital, 37:05').

**Figure 32: Piano Sonata (1924), 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bb.81 – 93**



Practising short technical passages suggested by Taneyev improves the stretching ability of the hands applied in both, ascending and descending directions, as well as allows preparing for the multitasking in particular section.

The following example is taken from my practice of Prokofiev's *Eighth Piano Sonata*, where in the development of the first movement it was relevant to combine Taneyev's 5-finger exercises with his *Exercises in Arpeggios*. This is mainly because of

<sup>111</sup> Music excerpt is taken from Igor Stravinsky *Sonate pour piano (1924)*, Edition Russe de Musique (S.et N.Koussewitzky), Boosey & Hawkes, p.17.

Prokofiev's extensive use of arpeggio passages in unrelated keys, such as D minor, B flat minor and G major, split in two voices of the same hand (Figure 33):<sup>112</sup>

**Figure 33: Piano Sonata Op.84, No.8, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bb.94 – 97**



It is useful to adjust the practice of Taneyev's *Exercises in Arpeggios* to the contrapuntal nature of Prokofiev's musical material in order to achieve the appropriate sound clarity desired in *Allegro moderato* tempo (Prokofiev *Piano Sonata in B flat major Op. 84, No.8, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, 04:50'*).

Both hands playing in unison one octave apart is a relatively rare occasion in Prokofiev's music.<sup>113</sup> However, such examples are worth analysing in the exposition and consequently recapitulation of the final third movement of his *Eight Sonata* (Figure 34).<sup>114</sup>

**Figure 34: Piano Sonata Op.84, No.8, 3rd movement, bb.71 – 79**

<sup>112</sup> Music excerpt is taken from *S.Prokofiev: Collected works, Vol.2, Moscow, Muzgiz, 1955, p.209.*

<sup>113</sup> There are notable examples of unison scalar passages one and two octaves apart in Prokofiev's *Second Piano Concerto* (2<sup>nd</sup> movement) and *Third Piano Concerto* (1<sup>st</sup> movement), however the octave arpeggiated passages are uncommon.

<sup>114</sup> Music excerpt is taken from *S.Prokofiev: Collected works, Vol.2, Moscow, Muzgiz, 1955, p.233.*



Arpeggios here are incorporated with octave elements in the manner that the passages must be performed with even and unaccented notes (apart from the tenuto, marked by Prokofiev on the first note of each bar). Application of the major triad's version of Taneyev's exercises (Figure 31, p.75) adjusted to the rhythm and phrasing of this particular movement's episode, helped me to achieve security in each finger, especially needed when used in combination with different technical task, such as octaves (Lecture-recital, 37-48').

Selected examples taken from my practice experience explain how performers can benefit from Taneyev's original exercises by adjusting them to the style, structure and virtuosic requirements of certain piece. The limited amount of information on Taneyev's piano technique and his practical instructions means there are still areas of piano performance artistry, such as playing with chamber ensemble and orchestra, pedalling and the repertoire choice to be identified and interpreted.



## **CONCLUSIONS**

My research has demonstrated that Taneyev was one of the most influential figures in Russia at the turn of the twentieth century. His contribution to the educational system at the Moscow Conservatory, his career as a concert pianist and his profound theoretic achievements place him in a position of great prominence in the history of Russian music. The value of his expertise and opinions is demonstrated in the correspondence of the musicians, theorists and pedagogues who were his contemporaries.

Examination of the fugue applied by Taneyev, Medtner, Stravinsky, Grechaninov, Prokofiev and Yevseyev in their piano works determined my practice strategies and performance style. Studying *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style* and *The Study of Canon*, which demonstrated various harmonic progressions and interrelation



intervals, enabled me to combine Taneyev's guidance in contrapuntal writing with the technical requirements and structural issues of the polyphonic repertoire I analysed. The theoretical aspects of contrapuntal technique I explored in combination with Taneyev's four unpublished sets of exercises for pianists enabled me to interpret the pieces with evident polyphonic elements, in accordance with Taneyev's instructions for voice leading and piano practice.

It can be argued that the exercises by Taneyev I have analysed in this dissertation helped to improve his virtuosic ability and performance style. However, through my selected recordings of his music supported by this dissertation I intended to demonstrate that the original exercises respond to the technical requirements of the majority of polyphonic piano repertoire. My practice has shown that Taneyev's instructions may need additional adjustment when used by other pianists performing different piano repertoire.

My determination to perform unknown or rarely performed polyphonic repertoire to a wider audience has resulted in the archival finding of Taneyev's *Fugue in D major* as well as Yevseyev's *Polyphonic pieces on Russian themes Op.57*. The analysis and interpretation of the suggestions contained within these piano works, together with other pieces from my portfolio may help to change the general opinion that the polyphonic repertoire is difficult for listeners, therefore rendering it less popular.

Nevertheless, repertoire choice is mainly a question of the performer's taste and technical abilities, the practice strategies and performance experience demonstrated in my research will, I trust, encourage more pianists to include major works with challenging contrapuntal elements in their repertoire. In my opinion, this will foster a deeper understanding of the performance characteristics peculiar to polyphonic music and its clear complementation of other genres.

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